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Libri disonesti:
Education and Disobedience
in the Eighteenth-Century Venetian Novel
(1753-1769)

by
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of Philosophy in Italian Studies

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Table of contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	p. III
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	IV
<i>Declaration</i>	VI
<i>Abstract</i>	VII
 <i>Introduction</i>	 1
1. The rise of <i>letteratura amena</i>	19
2. A new public and its enemies	53
3. The diseducation of an aristocratic daughter: Chiari's <i>La filosofessa italiana</i>	85
4. A killer's path to obedience: Antonio Piazza's <i>L'omicida irrepreensibile</i>	126
5. Excessive disobedience and alternative education: <i>L'avventuriere</i> and <i>I zingani</i>	160
<i>Conclusion</i>	212
<i>Bibliography</i>	222
Appendix A: A bibliography of eighteenth-century Venetian novels: first editions.	236

List of Tables

Table 1. Pasinelli's book catalogue (1761)	p. 40
Table 2. Catalogue of Chiari's works by Angelo Pasinelli (1761)	43
Table 3. Monthly wages and allowances in Venice, second half of the 18th century	45
Table 4. Cost of living in Venice, second half of the 18th century	45
Table 5. Cultural consumption.....	48
Table 6. <i>Mandati di stampa</i> of Chiari's novels published by Pasinelli, 1753-1761	48
Table 7. Novels and Chiari's and Goldoni theatrical production (1749-1753)	63

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Declaration

I confirm that the material contained in this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

The dissertation centres on representations of disobedience in four defining Venetian novels published between 1753 and 1769: *La filosofessa italiana*; *L'avventuriere*, *L'omicida irrepreensibile* and *I zingani*. The research sees disobedience as embodying cultural changes that occurred in Venetian society during the eighteenth century, in particular among the élite.

Disobedience is understood as any behaviour demonstrated against figures of secular authority (as in the parent-child relationship). It is, however, instrumental to interpretation of the text at multiple levels. First, it functions as a narratological device that triggers the development of the plot; second, it informs the didactic aims of the novel, by giving examples of behaviour performed by figures of authority, or subordinates. Third, it embodies changes experienced by readers in their contemporary life, offering a way to mediate conflicts through fiction. The dissertation investigates this function in relation to the élite, a heterogeneous group of high-income individuals from different classes. This group is identified as a privileged addressee of the novel.

The dissertation investigates the centrality of Venetian élites from two different angles. In the first part, the analysis focuses on publishing activities, cultural consumption, and the development of the Venetian book market. It shows how the emergence of the novel is closely related to the economic transformation of the market, and the role played by the urban élite, that had become a target audience for new cultural products such as the novel.

The relationship between literary representation and Venetian élites is further demonstrated through the analysis of the four novels. Alongside the analysis of disobedience from a literary perspective, the thesis adopts the topos to highlight cultural and social issues involving Venetian élites, such as the clash between generations; the reshaping of education; and the shift in social attitudes which transfers value from status to wealth. The research argues that, through the representation of disobedience, novels set limits of acceptable behaviours, mediating between individual needs and social requirements, and suggesting possible solutions to existing conflicts.

The dissertation stands at the crossroads of history (in particular Venetian history), literary criticism, and history of the book. This interdisciplinary approach makes an original contribution to the literary debate on the eighteenth century Italian novel and offers an innovative perspective from which to look at the emergence and development of this genre in the eighteenth century.

Introduction

For a long time, critics' negative reception of the eighteenth-century novel has transformed this genre into one of the most unfortunate and neglected topics of Italian studies. Daniela Mangione recently suggested that its poor reputation can also be seen in the fact that almost every scholar dealing with this genre has felt the need to justify their choice of topic.¹ It was as if the *damnatio* expressed by contemporaries like Giuseppe Baretti or Carlo Gozzi had not only survived but was still active after more than two hundred years.² The message seemed to be that the 'bad quality' of these

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- 1 'È interessante notare come ogni nuovo studio porti con sé, ancora, la necessità di riassumere i passi fondamentali della scoperta critica: segnale, questo della non completata assimilazione dei risultati di un'indagine che in effetti si mostra ancora largamente in fieri', Daniela Mangione, *Prima di Manzoni: autore e lettore nel romanzo del Settecento* (Rome: Salerno, 2012), p. 9 (fn 3). The first scholarship began with the positivist school: *Studi e ricerche intorno ai nostri romanzieri e romanzi del Settecento* (Bergamo: Istituto italiano d'arti grafiche, 1903; facsimile: *Romanzieri e romanzi del Settecento*, ed. by Luca Toschi and Maura Gori (Rome: Vecchiarelli, 1991); and *I romanzi dell'Abate Chiari* (Bergamo: Istituto Italiano d'arti grafiche, 1900); Emilio Bertana, 'Pro e contro i romanzi del Settecento', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 37 (1901), 339–52; Raffa Garzia, 'Recensione a *Studi e ricerche sui nostri romanzieri e romanzi del Settecento*', *Bullettino Bibliografico Sardo*, 3 (1903), 116–26. In different ways, I think five volumes have helped to renew the debate on the eighteenth century novel between the 1990s and 2000s: Giuseppe Antonelli, *Alle radici della letteratura di consumo: la lingua dei romanzi di Pietro Chiari e Antonio Piazza* (Milan: Istituto di propaganda libraria, 1996); Luca Clerici, *Il romanzo italiano del Settecento: il caso Chiari* (Venice: Marsilio, 1997); Carlo Madrignani, *All'origine del romanzo in Italia: il celebre Abate Chiari* (Naples: Liguori, 2000); Aldo Maria Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza: La narrativa di Antonio Piazza* (Naples: Liguori, 2002); Tatiana Crivelli, "*Né Arturo né Turpino né la Tavola rotonda*": *romanzi del secondo Settecento italiano* (Rome: Salerno, 2002). For an overview of existing scholarship before the 1990s see Ilaria Crotti, 'Rassegna di studi e testi del romanzo italiano nel Settecento (1960-1989)', *Lettere Italiane*, 42 (1990), 296–331; and more recently Ann Hallamore Caesar, 'History or Prehistory? Recent Revisions of the Eighteenth-Century Novel in Italy', in *Remapping the rise of the European novel*, ed. by Jenny Mander, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century – SVEC*, 10 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2007), 215–24. Two studies published recently, which have been important for various aspects of this research are Valeria G. A. Tavazzi, *Il romanzo in gara: echi delle polemiche teatrali nella narrativa di Pietro Chiari e Antonio Piazza* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2010) and Daniela Mangione, *Prima di Manzoni*.
- 2 On the eighteenth century debate about novels see for instance Elvio Guagnini, 'Romanzo e

books was intended to address the modest, ill-educated taste of readers with little or no culture at all, that is, the *volgo*. The construction of a national canon in the nineteenth century, with Manzoni's novel as its central model, helped to reinforce this judgement.³ Contemporary criticism usually insisted on the dangers of reading novels. At stake was the morality and good behaviour of the reader of *libri disonesti*. This reader was considered 'intellectually weak', and therefore easily influenced by the disobedient behaviour of characters in novels.

This dissertation investigates the relationship between the novel and its readers precisely by focusing on the theme of disobedience and education in Venetian novels. It argues that the representation of disobedience and education in novels brings to the surface conflicts and cultural and social changes that were occurring in contemporary society, and centres its analysis on the peculiar relationship that novels established with Venetian society, and in particular with the élites of the city, identified as the primary addressee of novels.

Education and disobedience

The analysis centres on four Venetian novels, used as case studies, and published between 1753 and 1769: Pietro Chiari's *La filosofessa italiana* (1753); Antonio Benedetto Basso's *L'avventuriere* (1761); Antonio Piazza's *L'omicida*

"sistema" letterario nella critica del Settecento e del primo Ottocento italiano. Appunti e proposte d'analisi', in *I canoni letterari: storia e dinamica* (Trieste: Lint, 1961), pp. 69–95; Antonio Motta, "Esiliarlo dal regno delle belle lettere?" Dibattiti sul romanzo nel Settecento italiano', in *Bufere e molli aurette: polemiche letterarie dallo Stilnovo alla "Voce"*, ed. by Maria Grazia Pensa (Milan: Guerini, 1996) pp. 119–43. More recently see Ilaria Crotti, 'Alla ricerca del codice: il romanzo italiano del Settecento', in Ilaria Crotti, Pier Mario Vescovo and Ricciarda Ricorda, *Il "mondo vivo": aspetti del romanzo, del teatro e del giornalismo nel Settecento italiano* (Padua: Poligrafo, 2001), pp. 9–54; Tatiana Crivelli, "Né Arturo", 18–72; Ann Hallamore Caesar, 'Bagatelle, Bamboccerie, and Bordellerie: The Critics and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century Italy', *Italian Studies*, 60 (2005), 22–41; Mangione, *Prima di Manzoni*, 17–58; Daniela Mangione, 'Ruoli e funzioni di autore e lettore nel dibattito settecentesco italiano sul romanzo', in *La riflessione sul romanzo nell'Europa del Settecento*, ed. by Rosamaria Loretelli and Ugo M. Olivieri (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2005), pp. 103–17.

3 On the scholarly reception from the nineteenth-century onwards see among others Madrignani, *All'origine del romanzo*, pp. 217–33 and Crivelli, "Né Arturo", pp. 73–82.

irreprensibile (1762-63) and *I zingani* (1769).⁴ In each of these narratives, a disobedient act allows the protagonist to escape from the control of parents or tutors, and have a series of adventures. These adventures correspond to her or his formative path. At the end of this learning process, protagonists have acquired skills and abilities and are ready to find their place in the world. This happens in Pietro Chiari's *La filosofessa italiana*,⁵ where the protagonist escapes from her boarding school, an act of rebellion against her parents, who want her to take vows. Piazza's *L'omicida irreprensibile*⁶ and Basso's *L'avventuriere*,⁷ both published at the beginning of the 1760s, are also based on a narrative of disobedience. The same applies in *I zingani*, with the difference that the disobedient attitude is shared between two protagonists; and the novel tells of their inevitable descent into moral corruption and crime, offering an unusually clear example of 'bad' education.

These representations involve two aspects of education. One is related to individual behaviours, morality and social rules. It corresponds to the Oxford English Dictionary definition of 'the process of "bringing up" (young persons); with reference to social station, kind of manners and habits acquired, calling or employment prepared for, etc.'.⁸ Parents and tutors carry on this process directly through restrictions, orders and explanations; and indirectly, by setting an example through their behaviour. In novels, the disobedient attitude of protagonists is often caused by the mistakes made by parents both directly (for instance through abuse of authority or

4 Pietro Chiari, *La filosofessa italiana, o sia le avventure della marchesa N.N., scritte da lei medesima*, 3 vols (Venice: Pasinelli, 1753); [Antonio Benedetto Basso], *L'avventuriere, o sia memorie di Rinaldo Dalisso, scritte da lui medesimo* (Venice: [Colombani], 1761); Antonio Piazza, *L'omicida irreprensibile, ovvero le funeste avventure del sig. di T. scritte da lui medesimo. Dedicate a sua eccellenza il signor Gio. Battista Semenzi*, 2 vols (Venice: de Castro, 1762–63); Antonio Piazza, *I zingani: storiella piacevole* (Venice: [Savioni], [1769]).

5 Analysed in chapter 3.

6 Analysed in chapter 4.

7 See the analysis of this novel (together with that of Piazza's *I zingani*) in chapter 5.

8 *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *OED*), 'Education', 3. The *OED* indicates this meaning as obsolete. It has nonetheless influenced the more current definition of education as 'culture or development of powers, formation of characters, as contrasted with the ramparting of mere knowledge or skill. Often with limiting word, as *intellectual, moral, physical*', *OED*, 'Education', 4.

lack of it) and indirectly (for instance by falling into vice and bad behaviours).⁹ A second meaning of education emerging from novels is that commonly used of ‘systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life’.¹⁰

All these novels centre on the development of protagonists who begin young and inexperienced and become independent adults who have learnt how to perform their social role. In the dissertation I use terms such as ‘novel of education’, or *Bildung* to describe the maturation of the main character. These terms are intended in a broad sense, as they do not completely overlap with existing interpretations of the *Bildungsroman*. As Richard Barney¹¹ argues, existing interpretations of this genre are driven by a ‘Romantic ideology’ that ‘encompasses not only assumptions about interiority and organic selfhood but also, perhaps more fundamentally, the apparently endemic opposition between self and society or system’.¹² Furthermore, most of these theories locate the production of such *Bildungsroman* between the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century. As Crivelli points out, however, trying to fit the constellation of eighteenth-century novels into existing categories is difficult. Categorization usually follows an invisible (but powerful) idea of literary evolution; a teleology of literary history that sees the ideal model of the novel in the nineteenth century, and makes all previous expressions ‘in costante marcia verso la sua realizzazione più

9 In the first two novels analysed, *La filosofessa italiana* and *L'omicida irreprensibile*, disobedience is caused precisely by the negative behaviour and attitude of parents towards their children.

10 OED, ‘Education’, 2.

11 Richard A. Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment: Education and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 29.

12 See for instance Wilhelm Dilthey’s *Poetry and Experience* (1906) now in *Selected Works*, ed. by Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, 5 vols (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991–96): v (1985); Martin Swales, *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978); Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso, 2000). A slightly different approach is that used by Dorothea E. von Mücke, *Virtue and the Veil of Illusion: Generic Innovation and the Pedagogical Project in Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), especially for the attention given to the relationship between educative purposes and literary genres during the century.

compiuta'.¹³ Nonetheless, similarities are still present: for instance the opposition between individual desires and social requirements indicated by Moretti as one defining feature of *Bildungsroman*. Venetian novels resolve this contradiction without a traumatic transformation, at the end of the narrative. Protagonists reach the position they deserve. Interestingly enough, such resolutions seem to neutralize any chance of mobility among different social classes (another defining feature, according to Moretti). At the end of the narrative, protagonists smoothly arrive in their original social position, the one that they were meant to fulfil from the beginning. In this sense, the eighteenth century novel would confirm Moretti's theory that social mobility was impossible in the *Ancien régime*.¹⁴ Among the novels analysed in this dissertation, there are at least two exceptions to Moretti's theory. The first is in *I zingani*, in which the character of Corradino embodies social rebellion and a desire for mobility. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Corradino will be punished directly by God. In other cases, the social mobility of protagonists is not completely absent: but is limited within the original social class. The career of *La filosofessa* as a young aristocrat with no fortune is a case in point, and the same can be said of Rinaldo in *L'avventuriere*.¹⁵

This aspect highlights once more the pivotal role played by education in these narratives. As Tatiana Crivelli points out,¹⁶ the predominance of this theme mirrors its dissemination in eighteenth-century cultural and social life. From philosophical treatises, the topic spread into every discourse, and every literary form.¹⁷

13 Tatiana Crivelli, "*Né Arturo*", pp. 152–53 (153). See also Jenny Mander's 'Introduction' in *Remapping the rise of the European novel* (2007), pp. 1–22.

14 Moretti, *The Way of the World*, pp. 4–5.

15 As I will argue in subsequent chapters, this desire for mobility is mainly generated by the contradiction between status and wealth, an issue that deeply affected Venetian aristocracy in the eighteenth century.

16 Crivelli, "*Né Arturo*", p. 103–113.

17 '[The discourse on education] finisce per permeare tutta la produzione letteraria dell'epoca', Crivelli, "*Né Arturo*", p. 106.

I shall illustrate one of the many possible examples. When Gian Francesco Pilati presented the *Dizionario Poligrafico*,¹⁸ he explained that its fundamental aim was to educate the reader, because from education ‘dipendono le azioni nostre, e per conseguenza si scorge di quanta importanza riesca che questa sia secondo i dettami della Religione e della Virtù’.¹⁹ And again, in the specific entry dedicated to education in the *Dizionario*: ‘Educazione, o maniera di dirigere, e d’istruire gli animi; scienza fra tutte la più difficile, e nello stesso tempo la più importante, nè mai bastevolmente studiata’.²⁰

Because it shaped the character and behaviour of young individuals, and therefore his or her future role in society, education had acquired in a broad sense a political dimension. Talking about it became also a way to discuss topics like social roles (and mobility), morality or politics. This transformation of the idea of education also implied new responsibilities for parents and tutors. New pedagogical theories set a qualitative model of education and made it possible to evaluate parents (or tutors) according to their ‘performance’ as educators. But this also played a role in undermining their absolute authority, opening the way to negotiation within the family.²¹

18 *Dizionario poligrafico, ovvero le cognizioni piu necessarie all'uomo onesto, e cristiano intorno alle scienze, alle arti liberali, e meccaniche, al commercio, alla storia naturale e civile, ed alla erudizione sacra e profana raccolte, alfabeticamente disposte ed illustrate con osservazioni critiche*, ed. by Giovanni Francesco Pivati, 7 vols (Venice: Pasinelli, 1761–68), I (1761), p. xv.

19 The last sentence reflects the point of view of this author, a clergyman well acquainted with enlightened ideas. It was also a very common way to defend these ideas from accusations of being unorthodox. On Giovanni Francesco Pivati and his role as editor of Encyclopaedic works see Mario Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana nel '700* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1989), pp. 45–48 and 58–59. See also Silvano Garofalo, *L'enciclopedismo italiano, Gianfrancesco Pivati* (Ravenna: Longo, 1980) and Mario Infelise, ‘Enciclopedie e pubblico a Venezia a metà Settecento: G. F. Pivati e i suoi dizionari’, *Studi settecenteschi*, 16 (1996), 161–90. The influence of Diderot’s and d’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie*, as well of Italian Enlightenment (Genovesi) on the *Dizionario Poligrafico* is mentioned by Franco Arato, ‘Savants, philosophes, journalistes: l’Italie des dictionnaires encyclopédiques’, *Dix-huitième siècle*, 38 (2006), 69–82.

20 *Dizionario poligrafico*, VII (1765), p. 389.

21 On this aspect see *Figure della paternità nell’Ancien Régime*, ed. by Paola Bianchi and Giacomo Jori (Turin: Accademia University Press, 2011); Marzio Barbagli, *Sotto lo stesso tetto: mutamenti della famiglia in Italia dal XV al XX secolo*, 2nd edn (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988); Marco Cavina, *Il padre spodestato: l'autorità paterna dall'antichità a oggi* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2007).

This created an evident conflict, which is precisely the source of disobedience in the novels. The main issue was that the conflict involved the family, and the parent-child relationship. Talking about a ‘crisis of obedience’ in Venice in the second half of the eighteenth century, Tiziana Plebani describes this conflict as ‘più a carattere culturale, generazionale, una mancata comunicazione o incomprensione’²² between children and parents. The conflict among families was part of a ‘trasformazione culturale e antropologica che forniva energia ai giovani’.²³

Un'altra pedagogia, una diversa base di relazione tra generazioni che tenesse conto dei sentimenti dei figli era ormai ribadita e trasmessa da molteplici canali di comunicazione. Se nel linguaggio dei padri i figli erano spesso apparsi come ‘barbari’, ora quest'appellazione pareva slittare invece sul genitore dispotico.²⁴

The novel subsumes these transformations into its narrative, staging the clash between old and new visions, and using the example of disobedience as the main framework in which these are performed.

The complex relationship between education, disobedience and the novel is also reflected in the didactic purposes of this genre, always presented as ‘vantaggioso da un punto di vista educativo: l'esempio di vita che in esso si ritrova dovrà far riflettere, ed educare chi legga’.²⁵ This dissertation considers this element from several viewpoints. Didacticism can be explicit, for instance in the use of principles, maxims, examples and meta-narrative inserts, when the author steps in to comment on and explain an episode. It can also be implicit, when narrative examples are presented

22 Tiziana Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti: amori e conflitti generazionali nella Venezia del Settecento* (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 2012), p. 274.

23 Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*, p. 251.

24 Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*, p. 80. See also Roberto Bizzocchi, *Cicisbei: morale privata e identità nazionale in Italia* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2008), p. 67.

25 Crivelli, “*Né Arturo*”, p. 108. Crivelli, inspired also by observations made by Hunter in a seminal study of the British eighteenth-century novel, describes the main features of novels’ didacticism (see in particular, pp. 220–29). J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: Norton, 1990), (in particular pp. 225–302).

without the mediation of the author, leaving (relative) freedom of interpretation to his readers. In the novels considered, Chiari's *Filosofessa* and Piazza's *Omicida* are clear examples of explicit didacticism, while in *I zingani* the opposite form predominates.

Reading the novel is therefore presented as a way of learning. In Madrignani's words, the protagonist-narrator of Chiari's novels praises

quella forma di autoeducazione che s'identifica con la lettura dei libri, intesa come un modo innovativo e anarchico di crescita complessiva. [...] L'elogio del libro riprende il motivo ricorrente nella strategia settecentesca, e poi specificatamente illuministica, di diffondere la cultura in forma accessibile e utile.²⁶

In this sense, novels promoted a form of education different from the traditional one. It was a way to self-educate through books, and by using the mediated experience of novels' characters as an example (to be followed or rejected). This form of self-education, however, clashes with a codified, traditional education that required the mediation of teachers in a controlled learning system.

This challenge to traditional education is also a result of the peculiar relationship that novels established with readers. This public was equally distant from the intellectual élite, which had been the main addressee of literature until that point, as from the (allegedly) uncritical, credulous and ignorant reader which intellectuals identified as the *volgo*.²⁷ From this perspective, the history of the eighteenth-century Venetian novel is also the story of the struggle of novelists to make this third category of 'lettore medio' acceptable, and of the resistance of the intellectual élite. Education – here in the sense of formal education – is once again the point of contention. The main difference separating intellectuals and non-specialised readers lies in the *cursus*

26 Carlo Madrignani, 'Introduzione', in Pietro Chiari, *La filosofessa italiana, o sia, Le avventure della marchesa N.N.: scritte in francese da lei medesima* (Lecce: Manni, 2004), pp. 5–28 (5).

27 On this division see Daniela Mangione, *Prima di Manzoni*, in particular pp. 121–34. The first scholar to mention the importance of the non-specialized public of the novel was Carlo Madrignani, *All'origine del romanzo*.

studiorum. The intellectual élite tended to reject *in toto* any form of education different from the traditional one, based on the Latin language²⁸ and Classical authors, which was common both in schools²⁹ and in private tutoring.³⁰ This was the most common education for young men of the élites (in particular aristocrats), in Venice and elsewhere.³¹ In this sense, the alternative education presented in novels could also be a way to promote education among those who were traditionally excluded from it, in particular women.³² From a broader perspective though, novels

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- 28 For one example of the debate about the use of Latin in education see *Pregiudizj d'insegnare le scienze e le arti alle popolazioni in lingua latina* (Venice: Coleti, 1777), which was a polemical reply to Giuseppe Antonio Aldini, *De varia latinae linguae fortuna* (Cesena: Biasini, 1775). On Aldini see Maria Leuzzi, 'Aldini, Gioseff Antonio', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 80 vols (Rome: Treccani, 1960–) (hereafter *DBI*), 2 (1960), [online] <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gioseff-antonio-aldini_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gioseff-antonio-aldini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) [accessed 20 June 2014].
- 29 On boarding schools for aristocrats and members of the élites see Gian Paolo Brizzi, *La formazione della classe dirigente nel Sei-Settecento: i "seminaria nobilium" nell'Italia centro-settentrionale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1976) and Gian Paolo Brizzi, 'Aux origines du système de mérite. Formation, recrutement et sélection des officiers de chancellerie de quelques grandes magistratures publiques italiennes XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles', *Paedagogica Historica*, 30 (1994), 249–65.
- 30 On private education see Patrizia Delpiano, 'Précepteurs: Instruction et éducation domestique dans l'Italie du XVIIIème siècle', *Paedagogica Historica*, 43 (2007), 525–45 and Patrizia Delpiano, 'Istruzione privata e istruzione pubblica nell'Europa dei Lumi: il dibattito sul ruolo del precettore', *Annali di storia dell'educazione*, 20 (2013), 133–45.
- 31 For an overview of the history of education in that century see Giovanni Genovesi, *Storia della scuola in Italia dal Settecento a oggi* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2010); *L'istruzione in Italia tra Sette e Ottocento*, ed. by Angelo Bianchi (Brescia: La scuola, 2007); *L'educazione dei figli*, ed. by Biagio Lorè, Carlo Pancera, and Giovanni Genovesi, 8 vols (Scandicci: La nuova Italia, 1999), IV: *Il Settecento* by Carlo Pancera (1999). For the Venetian context see Giuseppe Gullino, *La politica scolastica veneziana nell'età delle riforme* (Venice: Deputazione di storia patria per le Venezie, 1973); Giuseppe Gullino, 'Educazione, formazione, istruzione', in *Storia di Venezia: dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, ed. by Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, 12 vols (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1992–2002), VIII: *L'ultima fase della Serenissima*, ed. by Piero del Negro and Paolo Preto (1997), pp. 745–99 and more recently Antonella Barzani, *Gli affanni dell'erudizione: studi e organizzazione culturale degli Ordini religiosi a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento* (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 2004).
- 32 On this topic see Crivelli, "Né Arturo", pp. 106–13. In the novels considered here, the encouragement of women's education is certainly present in Chiari's *La filosofessa*; Basso's *L'avventuriere* embodies the most traditionalist perspective, limiting women to household education. On Chiari's position see Maria Ines Bonatti, 'L'educazione femminile nel pensiero degli illuministi e nei romanzi di Chiari', *Annali d'Italianistica*, 7 (1989), 226–73; Fiorella D'Alia, *La donna nel romanzo italiano del Settecento: con riferimento particolare all'opera dell'Abate Pietro Chiari* (Rome: Palombi, 1990). On the contemporary debate see at least Rebecca Messbarger, *The Century of Women: Representations of Women in Eighteenth-Century Italian Public Discourse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); *Italy's Eighteenth Century: Gender and Culture in the Age of the Grand Tour*, ed. by Paula Findlen, Wendy Wassyng Roworth and Catherine M. Sama (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Maria Camilla Briganti, *Fra realtà e rappresentazione: l'immaginario simbolico e i percorsi di istruzione femminile nel Settecento italiano* (Rome: Aracne, 2005); Carmela Covato, *Sapere e pregiudizio: l'educazione delle donne fra '700 e '800* (Rome: Archivio Guido Izzi, 1991); Franco Fido, 'Italian Contributions to the Eighteenth-Century Debate on Women', *Annali d'Italianistica*,

offered a range of precious information that a traditional education could not provide. As Crivelli points out: ‘agile, breve, scritto in maniera piana, il nuovo genere è pieno di casi della vita e di lezioni comportamentali’.³³ In this sense, they offered a wide spectrum of information even to those men who had been educated with traditional methods, which however had proved unsatisfactory in preparing them for their everyday life.³⁴

However, it should also be said that even this alternative education seems to be set aside for a limited part of society, people belonging to the élites. The lower classes (properly the *volgo*) do not seem to be involved in the new forms of education.³⁵

A quest for readers

Intellectuals saw no difference between readers of novels and the almost illiterate *volgo* usually associated with forms of ‘popular’ literature. This opposition between a privileged ‘lettore alto’ and an underprivileged ‘lettore basso’ has deeply affected the scholarly debate on the eighteenth century novel from the beginning.³⁶

7 (1989), 217–25.

33 Crivelli, “*Né Arturo*”, p. 112.

34 One of the most common theories about the novel’s public identifies women as the privileged addressee for this genre. Tatiana Crivelli has explained the limits of this interpretation. She writes: ‘dovremmo finalmente permetterci di pensare che, se c’erano uomini disposti a scrivere romanzi, potessero esserci anche uomini disposti a leggerli’. And then significantly closes: ‘i nuovi romanzi parlano alla società nel suo insieme: ad una società della quale riflettono – e per certi versi anticipano – i nuovi mutamenti sociali’. Crivelli, “*Né Arturo*”, pp. 121–22.

35 In the second half of the eighteenth century there was an increased attention toward the education of the lower classes. See for the French context Harvey Chisick, *The Limits of Reform in the Enlightenment: Attitudes toward the Education of the Lower Classes in Eighteenth-Century France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981). A contemporary example in Italy is Giuseppe Antonio Pozzi, *Sopra l’educazione del volgo dell’abate Giuseppe Antonio Pozzi* (Milan: Galeazzi, 1776). Pozzi excluded peasants from his project. Even more interestingly, his words highlight the enormous gap that separated this form of education, from that of the élites: ‘Grandi, e facoltosi non temete. Perché anche i poveri e piccioli abbiano, come voi, un’educazione, non perciò il vostro grado, i vostri agi, i vostri piaceri ne soffriranno. Anzi voi dovete assai compiacervene: perché quindi appunto avrete migliori artieri, migliori servi, dipendenti d’ogni maniera migliori; e vi dorrete un dì, che Plutarco e Locke solo intesi all’educazione signorile pensato non abbiano anche a questa sì preziosa e interessante porzione dell’human genere’, Pozzi, *Sopra l’educazione*, p. 5.

36 See the observations by Patrizia Delpiano, ‘Sulla riscoperta del romanzo italiano del Settecento: note a margine degli studi di Madrignani e Crivelli’, *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 116 (2004), 556–76.

Some scholars attempted to resolve this opposition by hypothesizing the coexistence of two types of readers: one cultured, who can appreciate the philosophical and erudite references in texts, and another unpretentious,³⁷ who would simply enjoy through acritical reading.³⁸ Finally, some scholars have expressed the theory of a stratification of the reading public, offering the idea of a ‘multiple reception’ of novels.³⁹ Pizzamiglio for instance describes the public of novels and *letteratura amena* as ‘pubblico eterogeneo che dagli strati popolari si estende a sfiorare le aristocrazie, di nascita e culturali’.⁴⁰

Pizzamiglio’s passage suggests a pyramidal distribution of the public that from lower classes ‘si estende a sfiorare le aristocrazie’. In this sense it locates the majority of readers among the *volgo*, still paying tribute to the traditional judgement about the readers of novels. I argue that we should turn this pyramid upside down; that the privileged public of the novel belonged to the urban élites of Venice,⁴¹ defined as a

37 Another interpretation saw the predominance of women as the main public of novels. This was already suggested by the first group of scholars who dealt with this genre (above all Marchesi). Madrignani seems to suggest a similar identification. Madrignani, *All’origine del romanzo in Italia*. The weakness of this hypothesis has been demonstrated by Crivelli, “*Né Arturo*”, pp. 113–22.

38 See the observations by Patrizia Delpiano, ‘Sulla riscoperta del romanzo italiano del Settecento: note a margine degli studi di Madrignani e Crivelli’, *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 116 (2004), 556–76. The duplicity of readers was formulated by Franco Fido, ‘I romanzi: temi, ideologia, scrittura’, in *Pietro Chiari e il teatro europeo del Settecento*, ed. by Carmelo Alberti (Vicenza: Pozza, 1986), pp. 281–301 and Ricciarda Ricorda, ‘I romanzi “americani” di Pietro Chiari’, in *L’impatto dell’America nella cultura veneziana*, ed. by Angela Caracciolo Aricò (Rome: Bulzoni, 1990), pp. 321–42. Clerici starts from similar positions, suggesting a proximity of the ‘lettore medio-basso’ with the reader of *almanacchi* and *lunari* (intended as popular literature): Luca Clerici, *Il romanzo italiano*, p. 147.

39 Giuseppe Antonelli, *Alle radici*; Crivelli, “*Né Arturo*”, pp. 98–102; Gilberto Pizzamiglio, ‘Le fortune del romanzo e della letteratura di intrattenimento’, in *Storia della cultura veneta*, ed. by. Girolamo Arnaldo and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, 10 vols (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1985), v.2: *Il Settecento*, pp. 171–96.

40 Even though he associates these different publics to different ‘tipologie narrative: romanzi satirico-filosofici per il livello più elevato; romanzi avventurosi, alla maniera del Chiari e del Piazza, per quello sottostante e, ancora sotto, un discreto numero di infelici romanzetti erotici, ad accontentare i palati meno esigenti’, Pizzamiglio, ‘Le fortune del romanzo’, p. 179.

41 The theory of a public mainly belonging to the middle-upper classes was already suggested by Giuseppe Antonelli, *Alle radici*, pp. 29–48; and reinforced by Patrizia Delpiano, ‘Sulla riscoperta del romanzo italiano’, ‘La Chiesa e la lettura nell’Italia del Settecento’, in *Rivista storica italiana*, 116 (2006), pp. 440–85 and Patrizia Delpiano, *Il governo della lettura* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2007), pp. 11–74; Tavazzi, *Il romanzo in gara*, pp. 207–17 and Mangione, *Prima di Manzoni*, pp. 42–43. The description of the Venetian élite public made by Mario Infelise is extremely clear in its formulation, though tailored on journalism and *letteratura amena* more generally, see Mario Infelise ‘L’utile e il piacevole. Alla ricerca dei lettori italiani del secondo Settecento’, in *Lo*

heterogeneous group of high-income individuals from different social classes (such as aristocrats, *cittadini*, and rich bourgeois). I support this hypothesis with material evidence (presented in chapters 1 and 2) as well as textual evidence (in the last three chapters).

The first two chapters focus on the book market of novels and *letteratura amena*, to show how the emergence of these genres was closely related to a profound transformation of the Venetian book world which lead some booksellers and printers to invest and put their efforts into a new urban market. In order to do so, I consider readers of novels as part of the more general public of *letteratura amena*. This category, which from the 1740s onwards is increasingly diffuse in the Venetian book market, includes other genres as well as novels, such as books of letters, theatre-plays, or travelogues. The public of these genres tend to coincide,⁴² and it would be impossible to study the novel's public outside of the broader context of *letteratura amena*.

The public of the *letteratura amena* was a new element in the book world, and part of that *Lesenrevolution* which involved all of Europe.⁴³ As already mentioned, until the second half of the eighteenth century, literary production had addressed either a small group of intellectuals, or – on the other side of the spectrum – the vast, undetermined audience of wide-circulation literature.⁴⁴ *Letteratura amena* addressed

spazio del libro nell'Europa del XVIII secolo, ed. by Maria Gioia Tavoni and Françoise Waquet (Bologna: Patron, 1997), pp. 113–26.

42 Gilberto Pizzamiglio, 'Le fortune del romanzo'; Gilberto Pizzamiglio, 'La letteratura d'intrattenimento nell'editoria veneziana del '700', in *L'editoria del '700 e i Remondini*, ed. by Mario Infelise and Paola Marini (Bassano: Ghedina & Tassotti, 1992), pp. 83–95.

43 Reinhard Wittmann, 'Was There a Reading Revolution at the End of the Eighteenth Century?' in *A history of reading in the West*, ed. by Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 284–312; See also Brendan Dooley, 'Lettori e letture nel Settecento italiano' in *L'editoria del Settecento e i Remondini* ed. by M. Infelise and P. Marini, pp. 17–37; Brendan Dooley, 'La seconde révolution de la lecture dans l'Italie du XVIIIe siècle', *Revue d'Histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 49 (2002), 69–88.

44 There is an ongoing debate about the use of the term 'popular' to define these genres. Italian scholars in particular have started defining this vast production of chapbooks and similar works as 'letteratura di largo consumo', therefore avoiding the social distinction. Almanacchi for instance were read and bought by all kinds of people. For an overview, see *Libri per tutti: generi*

a readership different from both of these: it was cultured enough to enjoy relatively complex texts and their cultural references; but it was also a non-specialised readership, alien to erudite and specialist topics, yet nonetheless interested in learning through reading. *Letteratura amena* partially reflects this desire, as publishers and authors keep claiming the importance of its double function – the entertaining and the didactic-informative.⁴⁵ This dualism can be found in all books of *letteratura amena*, including novels.

I have focused in particular on the role played by publishers in the book market. In particular, the analysis uses the career of the bookseller Angelo Pasinelli, one of the pioneers in the publishing of *letteratura amena* from the 1740s to the 1760s, as a case study. This focus on publishers – rather than authors – also means that I look at the book market from a different perspective. Recognising that publishers are not only invisible mediators between the author and the public (which is an image derived mainly from the Romantic interpretation of authorship), but instead actively involved and responsible for the development of literary products, affords an understanding of several aspects of the eighteenth-century novel which are otherwise difficult or impossible to explain, or to understand.

Venice is at the centre of this research, for several reasons. It was the commercial centre of novels, and the vast majority of first editions are published in this city. Moreover, the urban public of the city, its forms of sociability and its cultural environment, played a pivotal role in the production of *letteratura amena*. In

editoriali di larga circolazione tra antico regime ed età contemporanea ed. by Lodovica Braidà, Mario Infelise and Giorgio Bacci (Turin: UTET, 2010). Specifically in relation to Venice, see the recent Laura Canelos, *Con libri alla mano: l'editoria di larga diffusione a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento* (Milan: Unicopli, 2012).

45 The classical topos of *utile dulci* of course has a long and illustrious tradition, and it is a theme frequently referred to by Venetian printers since the Sixteenth century. As suggested by the name, *letteratura amena* seems to give more importance to the entertaining function, and scholars have often interpreted it privileging this element over the other. However, evidence in texts and paratexts suggests that these two functions were seen as complementary. On the didacticism of the novel see Crivelli, “*Né Arturo*”, pp. 220–29. The first study focusing on this aspect in British novels is J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels*.

this sense, I draw from the analysis recently offered by Tavazzi.⁴⁶ The satirical references included in novels suggest the existence of two levels of interpretation: a double set of information that, to be interpreted fully, requires the reader to know the actual individual or situation disguised in the text. Tavazzi has demonstrated how this system was active since *La filosofessa italiana* and was then continued by Piazza in the theatrical trilogy published in the 1770s and later.⁴⁷ Extremely detailed descriptions of secondary characters, who are often present in novels despite being useless for the economy of the plot, are cases in point. These portraits stand as fictional *personae* of actual people who are often difficult or impossible to identify. Actual readers in some cases confirm the presence of this double layer of meaning. In a copy of Piazza's *La tacita società dello spirito* held at the Correr's Library, the reader recognises the satirical portrait of a Jewish man.⁴⁸

I do consider Venetian élites as primary addressees of novels, defining *primary addressee* as a specific group of readers who – with their purchases – sustain the market of a publishing product. This definition is close to that of a ‘target public’ used in media marketing: a reference group of customers for whom a product is tailored. This primary addressee by no means corresponds to the total readership of the novel.⁴⁹ It is impossible to exclude that other social groups or categories, in Venice or elsewhere had access to these cultural products, providing they were

46 Tavazzi, *Il romanzo in gara*, pp. 199–216. The importance of Venice in the market of the novel and *letteratura amena* had been already highlighted by other scholars: see for instance Pizzamiglio, ‘Le fortune del romanzo’; Franco Fido, *Il paradiso dei buoni compagni: capitoli di storia letteraria veneta* (Padua: Antenore, 1988); Madrignani, *All'origine del romanzo*, p. 221; Stefano Calabrese, Antonella De Blasio and Elisabetta Menetti, ‘L’ascesa del romanzo (XVII-XVIII secolo)’, in *Atlante della letteratura italiana*, ed. by Sergio Luzzatto and Gabriele Pedullà, 3 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 2010–12), II: *Dalla Controriforma alla Restaurazione*, ed. by Erminia Irace, pp. 493–507.

47 Tavazzi, *Il romanzo in gara*, pp. 23–211.

48 ‘Venezia | Ebreo | (J?)ones, | e fù an= [che?] in Ve | [r]ona, men | [tr?]e io ave | [va?] questo | [l]ibretto, | [...] e me eru? | [...] ed altri; | Vice[?] Vangelo’, handnote in Antonio Piazza, *La tacita società dello spirito*, 3 vols (Venice: at the author's expenses, 1781), II, 66. Copy held at the Correr library [RAVA 3.6.17.1].

49 When I use more generic terms, such as ‘public’ or ‘readership’ while discussing publishing strategies (or textual representations) I am referring to this primary addressee, unless otherwise specified.

literate enough to read them.⁵⁰ In particular, I have not considered practices relating to the ‘second life’ of books, such as *prestanza*, or the market of used books, which was probably present in the city.⁵¹

Textual analysis, presented in chapters 3, 4 and 5, offers further evidence about the élites of the city as addressees of the novel. Narratives bring to the surface cultural and social issues which in particular involved Venetian high-income groups. The clash between generations;⁵² the transformation in the role of individuals, of the family and society;⁵³ or the shift in social attitudes which transferred value from status to wealth, are all issues that affected in particular the élites of the city. Of

50 On the relation between literacy and the novel, see Antonelli, *Alle radici*, p. 42; Caesar, ‘Bagatelle, Bambocserie, and Bordellerie’, p. 26; Delpiano, *Il governo della lettura*, p. 51.

51 Some information about secondary markets can be found in Laura Carnelos, *Con libri alla mano*, 166–208.

52 On this aspect see Francesca Meneghetti Casarin, ‘Diseducazione “patrizia”, diseducazione “plebea”: un dibattito nella Venezia del Settecento’, *Studi Veneziani*, 17 (1990), 117–57; Tiziana Plebani, ‘Se l’obbedienza non è più una virtù. Voci di figli a Venezia (XVII-XVIII secolo)’, *Cheiron*, 15 (2008), 159–78; Tiziana Plebani, ‘Matrimoni segreti a Venezia tra XVII e XVIII secolo: il pericoloso “suismo”’, in *La justice des familles. Autour de la transmission des biens, des savoirs et des pouvoirs (Europe, Nouveau Monde, XIIe-XIXe siècles)*, ed. by Anna Bellavitis and Isabelle Chabot (Rome: Ecole française, 2011), pp. 69–89; Tiziana Plebani, ‘Ragione di Stato e sentimenti nel Settecento’, in *Spazi, poteri, diritti delle donne a Venezia*, ed. by Anna Bellavitis, Nadia Maria Filippini, and Tiziana Plebani (Verona: Quiedit, 2012), pp. 117–34; Tiziana Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*. See also Peter Laslett, ‘La Famille et le ménage : approches historiques’, *Annales. Économies, sociétés, civilisations*, 27 (1972), 847–72; Maurice Daumas, ‘Les conflits familiaux dans les milieux dominants au XVIIIe Siècle’, *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 42 (1987), 901–23; Renata Ago, ‘Giovani nobili nell’età dell’assolutismo: autoritarismo paterno e libertà’, in *Storia dei giovani*, ed. by Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1994), I, 375–426; Linda A. Pollock, ‘Il rapporto genitori-figli’, in *Storia della famiglia in Europa*, ed. by Marzio Barbagli and David I. Kertzer, 3 vols (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2002–5), I (2002), 263–306; Maurizio Piseri, ‘Paternità naturale e paternità ragionevole: l’istituzionalizzazione dell’infanzia in età moderna’, in *Figure della paternità*, ed. by Bianchi and Jori, pp. 89–105; Anna Bellavitis, ‘Family and Society’, in *A companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*, ed. by Eric R. Dursteler (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 320–51.

53 Extremely useful for the transformation of aristocratic families are the studies by Volker Hunecke, ‘Il corpo aristocratico’, in *Storia di Venezia*, VIII, 359–430; and Volker Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano alla fine della repubblica (1646-1797): demografia, famiglia, ménage* (Rome: Jouvence, 1997). Other important information about aristocracy can be found in Piero Del Negro, ‘La distribuzione del potere all’interno del patriziato veneziano del Settecento’, in *I ceti dirigenti in Italia in età moderna e contemporanea*, ed. by Amelio Tagliaferri (Udine: Del Bianco, 1984), pp. 311–37; Paola Lanaro, ‘Fedecomessi, doti, famiglia : la trasmissione della ricchezza nella Repubblica di Venezia (XV-XVIII secolo). Un approccio economico’, *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome – Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines*, [online] 124/2 (2012), <<http://mefrim.revues.org/801>> [accessed 13 December 2014]. See also Maartje van Gelder, ‘Gaining entrance to the Venetian patriciate in the seventeenth century: The van Axel and Ghelthof families from the Low Countries’, *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome – Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines*, [online] 125/1 (2013), <<http://mefrim.revues.org/1201>> [accessed 17 June 2014].

course, I am not arguing, that these issues were *only* present among Venetian élites. I am arguing however, that representations in novels often draw from that specific context (for instance mirroring habits, behaviours or legislation typical of these social groups).

I have given considerable attention to changes and conflicts within the aristocracy. The first reason is extremely simple: in all novels considered (with the significant exception of the social rebel, Corradino, in *I zingani*), protagonists are aristocrats. Their behaviour, and even their thoughts, tend to conform to those expected from members of the aristocracy. The second reason is practical: in the large corpus of scholarship about the history of Venetian society, the aristocracy has the greatest share. However, this does not imply that the public was only composed of aristocrats. The composition of Venetian classes in the eighteenth-century is extremely complex, and this is clearly reflected by that of its élites.

Marriage policies are a clear example of this complexity. The clash between love and family interests is a recurring theme in novels. The protagonist is asked (or forbidden) by her family to marry somebody; either she refuses to obey or escapes from home to follow the person with whom she has fallen in love. But arranged marriage was a normal habit among the wealthy families of Venice, being the best way to preserve the family's estates.⁵⁴

In novels, we might expect a dramatic conflict between individual desires and social requirements, and the triumph of love and passion over interest. In fact, these novels offer an original mediation of this conflict. Protagonists learn how to cope with their feelings, to control them. They succeed in marrying the person they loved,

54 At the same time, aristocrat *barnabotti*, along with non-aristocratic families with a mid- to low income, did not have any estate to share, and were more used to marrying by choice.

but at the same time they have successfully adapted to social rules and family requirements.⁵⁵

Venetian élites, however numerous, were a minority. Was it possible for them to sustain the market of novels and *letteratura amena*? The answer is yes, with reservations. As Infelise points out, circulation numbers in the second half of the century, and particularly between 1740s and 1760s, tend to be low.⁵⁶ The *Gazzetta veneta* sold no more than 300 copies, but survived (though with many struggles) for two and a half years. Considering higher circulation numbers for the novel (Clerici and Antonelli hypothesized about 1500 copies)⁵⁷, the number of people in Venice who could afford these books was high enough to pay back the investment of the publisher.

Without a higher number of readers, however, *letteratura amena* remained a risky business, which depended on the mood of the public. ‘Un nuovo pubblico esisteva, ma era esiguo; non aveva ancora gusti ben caratterizzati, provava molto, ma stentava ad affezionarsi’.⁵⁸ The relatively small size of the Venetian population makes a difference, when compared with the larger markets of London or Paris. This is also one of the causes of the decline of the novel: from the second half of the 1770s, the number of new titles decreases dramatically, to almost disappear in the following century. By the end of the century also, the attempts made by publishers and authors to legitimize the ‘lettore medio’ will have failed. Daniela Mangione has

55 ‘The corresponding educational scenario is one of gentle integration of an individual into a family, in which paternal authority has weakened if not entirely vanished’, Mücke, *Virtue and the Veil of Illusion*, p. 9.

56 See the analysis in Mario Infelise, ‘Il mercato dei libri (XVII-XVIII secolo)’, in *Atlante della letteratura italiana*, ed. by Luzzatto and Pedullà, II, 428–40 (430).

57 Clerici, *Il romanzo del Settecento*, p. 9; and Antonelli, *Alle radici*. The recent revision of circulation numbers proposed by Infelise should probably suggest lowering this number to 1000 or even less copies. This is also true for “foreign” editions: Carmignani printed 300 copies of Chiari’s novels. Indicated by Alberta Pettoello, who quotes the *Gazzetta di Parma*, 23 luglio 1765, in Alberta Pettoello, ‘La circolazione del libro nella Parma dei Borbone (1749-1805)’ (unpublished Tesi di dottorato in Scienze librerie e documentarie, Rome: Roma “La Sapienza,” 2011). I am grateful to Dr. Pettoello who sent me the pages about Carmignani.

58 Mario Infelise, ‘L’utile e il piacevole’, 114.

lucidly presented the causes that contributed to this failure,⁵⁹ some relating to the market and the number of available readers, some to the refusal of the intellectual élite to accept and legitimate this public.

In order to fully understand the decline of *letteratura amena* and novels though, it is better to look first at the thriving world of Venice before the middle of the century: the years following the last moment of glory of its book world, which harboured the discovery of the Venetian public, the emergence of *letteratura amena*, and the novel.

59 Mangione, *Prima di Manzoni*, 109–45.

1. The rise of *letteratura amena*

The emergence of new original novels at the end of the 1740s and the beginning of the 1750s was the result of a deep transformation of the book market, as well as of the cultural environment of Venice. The novel as a genre was part of a wider movement involving several cognate genres, all included in the definition of *letteratura amena*. This chapter investigates some of the elements that characterised the emergence of these new genres. In particular, it describes the discovery and exploitation of a new public in the 1740s. The case study analysed is the publication, and great success, of Antonio Costantini's *Lettere critiche*, probably the first *letteratura amena* best seller, which for the first time demonstrated to publishers and authors the commercial potential of this kind of product. The present chapter focuses on material aspects related to these genres, to express a hypothesis about their possible addressees.

The analysis gives particular attention to the figure of Angelo Pasinelli and his activities. This entrepreneur has a marginal position in existing studies on the Venetian book world. He never had the influence or wealth of some other businesses, such as Baglioni, Albrizzi, or Hertz. He is certainly not an adventurer of the book world, nor did he spend his time looking for eye-catching titles, or following the latest ideas coming from France, another valid reason for studying such a figure. Pasinelli even maintained a marginal role in one of the most lucrative markets of his

times, the pamphlet-war against (or for) Jesuits which had made the fortune of many Venetian entrepreneurs between the 1750s and the 1760s.¹

So how can the life and activity of a modest bookseller be considered exemplary for the study of the novel's market in eighteenth-century Venice? This question can be answered in many different ways. The first and most evident is that Pasinelli's catalogue of novels is the richest in the city during the century, and his collaboration with Pietro Chiari is already worthy of study. In the 1750s and 1760s, Pasinelli was certainly one of the most involved in the new genre.²

Second, and no less important, his production offers a good perspective from which to look at the development of a market for *letteratura amena* and the novel. The 'rise' of these genres did not happen by chance, or because of a sudden burst of creativity. It was sought after and pursued by Venetian publishers who were trying to adapt to a transformation of the book market. It was a conscious decision aimed at exploring (and later developing) the potential of a new public, different from those addressed before.

The career of Pasinelli is similar to that of other entrepreneurs of his generation who contributed actively to the development of the Venetian book industry in the 1730s and 1740s. In the 1720s and 1730s, the careers began of printers and booksellers such as Giambattista Pasquali, Simone Occhi, Francesco Pitteri and Giuseppe Bettinelli, all of whom came to set up important businesses in the following decades. As Infelise points out, most of them, including Pasinelli, were self-made traders: 'li accomunava la mancanza di significative tradizioni tipografiche alle spalle, la giovane età e l'intraprendenza'.³ The initiative of these individuals proved

1 Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, pp. 90–94.

2 The importance of Pasinelli's activity in the market of novels has been highlighted among others by Pizzamiglio, 'Le fortune del romanzo', p. 188 and (more recently) Cristina Cappelletti, "'Un diluvio di romanzi perniciosi': per una storia editoriale dell'Abate Chiari", *Studi sul Settecento e l'Ottocento*, 4 (2009), 39–53.

3 Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, p. 55.

pivotal in the development of the Venetian book world during the eighteenth century, and in the transformation of the market that took place in the second half of that century.⁴

Their activities also reflect a transformation in the roles and activities of book entrepreneurs, as they had changed over time. Venetian *matricolati* had traditionally divided themselves among three groups, depending on their activities: booksellers (*libreri*), printers (*stampadori*), and printer-booksellers (*stampadori-libreri*). Booksellers had direct contact with the public in their shops, and were not required to have technical knowledge about printing (though many of them had a press to use for their needs). Printers usually did not have a shop of their own, and could either print for themselves, or for colleagues who needed their services. Printer-booksellers had had a major role in previous centuries, and to this group still belonged the richest and most powerful entrepreneurs during the eighteenth century, such as Baglioni and Pezzana. However, this form was rapidly declining due to the modification of the book market which, in its mutability, was more suitable for medium and small businesses with fewer and lower running costs.⁵

Pasinelli's generation witnessed an increasing division among these groups: while most of the old and rich printer-booksellers declined, booksellers slowly transformed their activities to something similar to what we consider modern publishing. The figure of the publisher which will appear in the following century, was that of a trader who did not need a printing press but only capital to invest in new (and saleable) products. This tendency is already to be found in eighteenth-century Venice: printers without shops were increasingly losing entrepreneurship and

4 They would be followed by a younger generation of entrepreneurs, who were to be the ones most involved, among others, in the diffusion of *letteratura amena*. We can mention for instance Antonio Graziosi, Paolo Colombani, Giammaria and Leonardo Bassaglia, and Antonio Zatta. The majority of them had started their career in the 1750s; some survived until the following century.

5 Marino Berengo, 'La crisi dell'arte della stampa veneziana alla fine del XVIII secolo', in *Studi in onore di Armando Saporì*, 2 vols (Milan: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1957), II, 1319–38; Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, p. 138.

depended on booksellers' commissions. The extreme competition led most of them into financial difficulties, as in many cases they remained only executors of others' requests⁶, and lost any control over the production process.

Booksellers with medium size businesses had a pivotal role in the development of new products. They could not risk the same capital as their richer colleagues, and therefore had limited access to the most profitable international markets. Also, and this is particularly true before the crisis of the book world in the 1760s⁷, some of them still attempted to invest low levels of capital.

A look at the knowledge expected of every future bookseller and printer wishing to enter the *Arte*, may help to understand the transformation of the Venetian publishing world. Each candidate wishing to become a bookseller or printer had to pass an examination in front of the *Banca*, the governing body of the Guild. The structure of this exam is recorded in a document of 1767, although the practice had already existed since the sixteenth century.

Examination for those who seek Matriculation in the Guild of Booksellers.

1. Name the principal Bibles.
2. Name the principal Saints and Fathers, Greek and Latin.
3. Name the principal expositors of Holy Writ.
4. Name the principal theologians—controversialist and polemical writers.
5. Name the principal writers on ecclesiastical history.
6. Name the ancient writers on philosophy and history; also the principal poets, tragic as well as comic, in Greek and Latin.
7. Name the principal writers on the law of nature, the law of nations, on civil and canon law, on philosophy, metaphysics, and ethics.
8. Name the principal geographers, Greek, Latin, Italian, and French.
9. Name the principal historians, ancient and modern, letter writers, antiquarians, numismatists, mathematicians, physicians, surgeons, anatomists, jurists.

6 Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, pp. 132–33.

7 Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, pp. 275–338; Berengo, 'La crisi dell'arte della stampa'.

10. Name the principal writers on the fine arts—painting, sculpture, and architecture, civil and military.

11. Name the principal writers on natural history and botany.

Further, all candidates must be able to read and write Italian fluently, and must have a sufficient knowledge of Latin and of French. The examiners shall put some practical questions on the conduct of a bookseller's business.⁸

The list states an ideal ranking of genres which reflects the book business as it was traditionally conceived. Religion (addressed by five questions), erudite and academic writing, classics and ancient literature all stand for what was believed important for the business, and not surprisingly these genres formed the core of the Venetian book trade. What is missing from the list is precisely the *letteratura amena* – theatre-plays, novels, books of letters – that in the 1750s and 1760s were increasingly present in the market, diffused in particular thanks to entrepreneurs like Pasinelli.

While the production of small, cheap religious works was a common feature among Venetian booksellers and printers, larger expensive editions were usually published by ambitious businessmen and aimed at an international public. As Marino Zorzi puts it:

Di gran lunga più redditizi i libri della seconda categoria: se in latino si vendevano in tutto il mondo cattolico, al pari dei libri liturgici, se in italiano trovavano un vasto mercato presso monasteri, conventi, scuole religiose, seminari, dotti ecclesiastici (non va dimenticato che la cultura è ancora quasi monopolio di monaci e “abati”). Anche se abbondano i libri religiosi del primo tipo, i migliori stampatori veneziani si dedicano di preferenza al secondo.⁹

8 Horatio F. Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press: An Historical Study Based upon Documents for the Most Part Hitherto Unpublished* (London: Putnam, 1891), pp. 186–87. Not only had a bookseller to be literate therefore, but he [presumably never ‘she’] also needed a certain degree of culture. This was not always the case, and some of them were described by contemporaries as ‘ignorant’ or ‘uncultivated’.

9 Marino Zorzi, ‘La stampa, la circolazione del libro’, in *Storia di Venezia* ed. by Benzoni and

A second important stream of Venetian products was related to erudition, history of art, and medicine as well as collectors' editions. If religious and devotional literature formed the backbone of the Venetian book market, involving rich, medium and poor publishers equally, these genres were more common among the large and medium-sized businesses. Some texts required an initial investment which not everybody had at their disposal.

These texts can be divided into two categories: a first group was aimed at an audience of intellectuals and rich *amateurs* of culture who could afford to pay large sums of money for large *folio* or *quarto* books, richly illustrated and printed on the finest paper. A second group was rather composed of less demanding readers – i.e. students and scholars – who bought manuals and reference books for their studies.

This production brings to the surface the network of intellectuals and scholars, the *Repubblica letteraria* that represented an important part of the public addressed by books of erudition, and literature. For instance Johann Caspar Goethe, father to the famous Johann Wolfgang, recalls the name of Pasinelli along with Pasquali and Albrizzi, when describing the lively intellectual exchanges hosted in their shops.¹⁰ Goethe seems particularly dazzled by the fact that the people entering and stationing in these bookshops apparently

frequentavano le botteghe più per studiare e per servirsi di quei libri che per comprare [...] non so se avessero o no comperato prima; sin tanto che io vi fui non vidi altro che leggere e discorrere. In queste librerie, sotto pretesto di comprare una bagatella può farsi conoscenza coi primi della città.¹¹

The German traveller highlights the social status of these (not very good) customers, who were mainly intellectuals and aristocrats, 'nobili ed altra gente

Menniti Ippolito, VIII: *L'ultima fase della Serenissima*, ed. by Piero del Negro and Paolo Preto (1997), pp. 801–60 (802).

10 Johann Caspar Goethe, *Reise durch Italien im Jahre 1740; Viaggio per l'Italia* (Munich: Beck, 1988).

11 Goethe, *Reise durch Italien*, pp. 38–41, quoted in Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, pp. 50–51.

scientifica'. The publishing production of these decades, and the presence of Pasinelli's name and works in scholarly periodicals of the time, such as the *Novelle letterarie* or the *Giornale de' letterati*, shows a bookseller at ease with the 'primi della città', well-known and respected within intellectual circles and by his peers. But all these elements help also to interpret a further development in Pasinelli's career, the passage from 'traditional' production to the increasingly 'modern' one of *letteratura amena*.

Following the harsh judgement expressed by many contemporary intellectuals about the novel and *letteratura amena* in general, and the (once) commonly accepted notion that such books addressed a public (socially and intellectually) different from the one addressed in the first half of Pasinelli's career, the change seems dramatic and quite unjustified. But looking closely, and comparing the two productions, it becomes clear that the shift – which is progressive and not definitive, as the bookseller will keep publishing books from traditional genres – did not happen by chance.

The first volume of *Lettere critiche* by Giuseppe Antonio Costantini is a perfect case study to show the emergence of *letteratura amena* and its urban public.¹² The *Lettere* enjoyed enormous public success, and had to be reprinted several times. They demonstrated to Venetian booksellers a potential public interested in different products from the ones they were used to.

But how is it that Pasinelli started publishing such works? How is it that an entrepreneur esteemed and at ease with many Italian and Venetian intellectuals and ‘primi della città’ could possibly move to print such different literature? The apparent contradiction is in fact partially due to the negative reputation which the *letteratura amena* had among the intellectual élite, a reputation which has reverberated in critical interpretation until recently. Contemporary *uomini di lettere* have either condemned or ignored the *letteratura amena*, creating from the beginning a large gap between works produced by (and for) the intellectual élite, and those made for a wider, non-specialised public. In this sense, the shift in production made by Pasinelli seems to contradict his career until that point.

In fact, it is likely that the choice to focus on *letteratura amena* resulted from an estimation made by Pasinelli of the potential of this product over others. In other words, because of the increasing importance of ‘new’ books and public, Pasinelli decided to open a new front in his activities. There were also financial reasons: the new genres required less financial exposure: there were many factors which helped to cut costs. Among others, the absence of illustrations, a lower cost for paper size (most

12 Giuseppe Antonio Costantini, *Lettere critiche giocose, morali, scientifiche ed erudite, alla moda, ed al gusto del secolo presente, del Conte Agostino Santi Pupieni*, 2 vols (Venice: Pasinelli, 1743). On Antonio Costantini see Angela Dillon Bussi, ‘Costantini, Giuseppe Antonio’, *DBI*, 30 (1984) <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-antonio-costantini_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-antonio-costantini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) [accessed 4 May 2013]. On books of letters and Costantini’s work still extremely useful is the chapter ‘Di alcuni pseudo-epistolari in Francia e in Italia’ in Giuseppe Ortolani, *Settecento, per una lettura dell’abate Chiari* (Venice: Fondazione Giorgio Cini, 1960), pp. 71–194; for Costantini’s work see in particular pp. 172–92.

of novels were in *octavo* or *duodecimo*) and quality (it was usually the ‘mediana’). Even the techniques of typographic composition were easier (there was no apparatus and paratext to compose in a different font size, such as footnotes, sidenotes, etc). Finally, authors of this kind of literature were usually paid less than their colleagues. These elements, and the fact that the diffusion of ‘modern’ books within Venice was increasing during the 1740s and 1750s (as general production records seem to show), were probably good enough to merit involvement in the new market.

The difference between the public of *letteratura amena* from that which Pasinelli was used to before can be seen in the paratexts introducing these new books. The expectations of these new readers are different, and differently met: it is no longer important to stress the quality of the paper or the correctness of the edition, but rather to highlight how useful and at the same time pleasurable reading the book may be. ‘Usefulness’ and ‘pleasurability’ are highlighted over and over again in novels and books of letters both by publishers and authors, and can be seen as one of the main characteristics of *letteratura amena* in general.

The first volume of the *Lettere*, published in 1743, is introduced by two texts written by Pasinelli (and none by the author). They may help to see what strategies Pasinelli used to convince his readers, and even what ideas he had about this kind of literature. There is a clear difference between the *dedica* and the indications given to the ‘normal’ reader which follow it. The dedicatee of the book is a young aristocrat, Alvise Giustinian-Lollin and the text has several similarities with other *dediche* of that time.¹³ Pasinelli stresses the merit and greatness of the Giustinian-Lollin house, referring in particular to Alvise’s father:

A queste lettere critiche, che all’affetto del Mondo compariscono col mezzo
delle mie stampe, un idoneo difensore cercando, ed essendomi di continuo

13 For an analysis of *dediche* and their function in eighteenth-century Italy see Marco Paoli, *L'appannato specchio: l'autore e l'editoria italiana nel Settecento* (Lucca: Pacini Fazzi, 2004).

presente, come lo esige la gratitudine, quella generosa bontà, colla quale tutta l'Eccellentiss. Casa dell'Eccellenza Vostra degnò sempre risguardare la mia persona, e quanto a me appartenesse; giudicai onor mio insieme, e mio vantaggio il collocarle sotto la protezione della medesima: in grembo alla quale esaminando a chi appoggiar le potessi fissai sopra l'Eccellenza Vostra, che non ancora imbarazzata nelle pesantissime ad un tempo, ed onorevoli incombenze del pubblico Governo, come lo sono con tanto lustro proprio, ed utile universale il Veneratissimo di lei Padre, e quanti fanno parte d'una tanto illustre famiglia, quanto è quella dell'Eccellenza Vostra; fissai (dico) sopra l'Eccellenza Vostra, che può con agio, ed autorità validamente proteggerle. A lei adunque le consacro; sicuro, che oltre il vegliare alla difesa di queste, si compiacerà aggradire il tributo d'un antico, sincerissimo Servitore, quale non tanto implora protezione al suo libro, quanto pretende offrire un attestato della sua profondissima stima.¹⁴

Pasinelli then describes the content of the *Lettere*, which simply aim to 'delineare il Mondo, qual è al presente, e spera l'autore, l'esito corrisponda all'assunto'. The following sentences emphasise the usefulness of the book for the dedicatee himself:

L'Eccellenza vostra, che tuttora sotto i riflessi savissimi d'un Vigilantissimo Genitore non conosce per anco il Mondo per pratica, potrà anticipatamente in Teorica considerarlo; perchè poscia unita l'esperienza alla cognizione possa fare la meritata giustizia all'autore, e compatire nel medesimo tempo il coraggio di quello, che dedicandole la presente operetta, altro non presume, che assicurarla di quel rispetto, che lo fa glorioso nel nominarsi.¹⁵

At the centre of Pasinelli's argumentation is the assumption that the book can offer the young reader the possibility to know the world *before* getting involved in it. Thus, the *Lettere* are presented as a guide for learning how to live. The stress on the didactic function is a typical feature of *letteratura amena*, and will be praised and promoted in very similar terms also in novels.

The address to the 'common' reader that follows has a slightly different tone:

14 Costantini, *Lettere critiche*, I, pp. [iii–v].

15 Costantini, *Lettere critiche*, I, p. [v].

Il genio degli Uomini è vario. Tutti li Libri non sono per ogni genere di persone, perché non tutti trova il Leggitore pabolo [sic] al proprio gusto. Altri ancora, a guisa di chi diletta di godere ne Prati la varia distribuzione de fiori, che ivi fa la innocente negligenza della Natura, gode di pascersi in varie materie. Sij tu, che leggi o di stabile, o di vagante genio, spero, che troverai nella raccolta, che ti presento, di che soddisfarti. La tua compiacenza potrà incoraggiar [sic] me a proseguire ciò, che resta di questa impresa delle mie stampe; e forse recare a te quel vantaggio, che non supponi.¹⁶

Differently from the *dedica*, in his *avviso* to the reader the bookseller does not seem to have clearly in mind the identity of his readers. Thus, he decides to play with the multiplicity of topics covered in the *Lettere*. The comparison between the different ‘genio’ of readers, and the different topics anthologised in the *Lettere*, transforms a book which has no ‘clear’ aim or topic (in comparison with other genres), into a text in which anybody can find something interesting. The last sentence stresses once more such unpredictability: the reader might ‘inadvertently’ derive a benefit from reading it.

In Pasinelli’s perspective, the public of the *Lettere* was indeed unpredictable, as any public of a new product could be. It is also clear from his words that the publication of any further volumes of the *Lettere* depended on the public’s reception. Only if the reader was ‘compiacente’ enough, would Pasinelli be encouraged to publish other volumes. He was probably not bluffing: the *licenze di stampa* show that he registered the first volume in the October 1742, and the second not until the April of the following year.¹⁷ Introducing the second volume of the *Lettere*, Pasinelli explains what happened, and insists on the same path:

L’aggradimento, con cui è stato ricevuto dal Pubblico il primo Tomo delle Lettere Critiche, fino a ridurmi in pochi mesi al pensiero, ed alla necessità di una seconda edizione, mi ha accresciuto il coraggio di proseguire. [...]

16 Costantini, *Lettere critiche*, I, p. [vii].

17 Venice, Archivio di Stato (hereafter ASV), *Arti, Mandati*, 340: First volume: 27 October 1742; Second volume: 8 June 1743.

Eccoti adunque il secondo Tomo di questa materia, che potrà essere in progresso seguito da altri, qualora il tuo compatimento prosiegua a darmi testimonianza della tua compiacenza.¹⁸

The publication of the *Lettere* did not proceed without problems, as the relationship between Costantini and the bookseller had rapidly deteriorated. The matter of dispute (quite common in those times) was money. Pasinelli had paid the author a sum for the manuscript of the first volume, and probably refused to reconsider the contract even in view of the great success with the public that the *Lettere* were having.

For this reason, Costantini decided to pass the remaining work to another printer, Pietro Bassaglia. The action triggered a long legal dispute between the two entrepreneurs, which has left several traces in the archives. The *Riformatori* received several *suppliche* from the two, both claiming the exclusive right to print Costantini's work. The magistrates eventually decided to give Bassaglia the permission to finish the publication of the *Lettere*, on the condition that he put the name of Pasinelli together with his own in the frontispiece.¹⁹ The trouble however did not stop there, periodically re-emerging until the end of the 1740s.

The story of the *Lettere* offers a good perspective from which to look at the emerging market for this kind of literature, and at the same time at the problems faced by entrepreneurs who decided to invest in it. The first effect of the *Lettere*'s success was a boost in the publication of books of the same genre. Pasinelli had an important role in this. If Costantini's *Lettere* had to be reprinted several times because readers did not seem to have enough of them, then they would probably appreciate similar books. The first edition of this kind was a translation, the *Riflessioni critiche sopra i*

18 Costantini, *Lettere critiche*, II, [iii].

19 The *suppliche* can be found in ASV, *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova*, 29, cc. 760–761; while some copies of it are in *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova*, 362: *Suppliche, ricorsi, avvisi*. See also Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, p. 195.

costumi ridicoli del nostro secolo by Morvan de Bellegarde. The work had been translated by Costantini himself, but the manuscript was still in Pasinelli's hands. The first volume appeared at a very delicate moment of the dispute with Costantini and Bassaglia, in the summer of 1744.²⁰ A *supplica* to the *Riformatori* signed by Bassaglia clearly explains the cause of the denunciation: apparently ignoring the decision of the magistrates in favour of Bassaglia, in the introduction to Bellegarde's *Riflessioni* Pasinelli had advertised the forthcoming third volume of Costantini's *Lettere*:

Espose egli in quest'oggi le Riflessioni critiche sopra i costumi dell'Abate Bellegarde tradotte, ed a lui consignata dal medesimo Autore delle Lettere Critiche. E si fa lecito di cambiare la Lettera al Lettore inserita dal Traduttore nel manoscritto con apparente promessa di esporre ben presto il terzo tomo delle Lettere Critiche. Il che dà a vedere ai lettori, che il Tomo già da me esposto previo il più rigido esame di EEVV sia un'impostura di distrarre per conseguenza l'affluenza a me necessaria per risarcirmi dalle spese sofferte. Questo è dal pari in offesa dal comando di VVEE poichè non può egli promettere al mondo Lettere Critiche col titolo di terzo Tomo, perchè dalla loro grandissima autorità gli è proibito di farlo.²¹

The dispute reached a temporary pause in 1747, when we find two *mandati* registered in the same day by Pasinelli and Bassaglia, the former recording volumes 1-2, the latter the volumes 3-6. Nonetheless, in the same period there appears a further problem which forces the two entrepreneurs to join forces: the flood of illegal publication of the *Lettere*. In a *supplica* (which is undated but possibly written in 1747 or the following year), they explain the problem to the magistrates: there are two foreign editions which have been made of Costantini's work, one in Milan (by

20 There are two different *mandati* for Bellegarde's two volumes, one dated 5 June, another 3 August. Although there is no annotation in the book, it is possible that the first one had been blocked by the *Riformatori* after Costantini's and Bassaglia's complaints, see ASV, *Arti*: Mandati e licenze di stampa, 340.

21 ASV, *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova*, 362.

Francesco Agnelli) and another in Naples ‘a spese della Compagnia’, even though ‘tutti li riscontri dimostrino essere state fatti anti in un medesimo tempo, e sotto un medesimo torchio’. The two plaintiffs strongly suspect that in fact these editions have been plotted by their Venetian colleagues:

Questo termine di Compagnia fa dubitare, esservi intelligenza e interesse di Librai Veneti; poichè certamente con impudenza l’ultima annunciata edizione si vede in vendita in copia appresso Gio: Maria Lazzaroni Libraio al S. Gaetano appresso il Ponte de’ Baretteri. Durano li nostri privilegi giusta la legge 1603: ii. Mag. Ancora per quindici anni, e perciò ci umiliamo all’autorità di questo grandissimo Mag.to, acciò ritenuta la verità, vengano eseguite le sagre leggi contro de’ delinquenti a salvezza de nostro interesse, e del Commercio di questa Piazza.²²

Costantini’s *Lettere* are frequently to be found among the lists of unlawful titles confiscated in *dogane*, along with many other books originally published in Venice, reprinted elsewhere and reintroduced into the city. However what is particularly important in this accusation is that the makers of these illegal copies were, in the victims’ opinion, some of their colleagues. This information might help to arrive at a first conclusion about the public of the *Lettere*: that these were addressed firstly to the Venetian public.

A good example of the importance of Venetian demand for this kind of literature is an episode reported by Mario Infelise. In 1756, Venetian officers of the *dogana* seized a number of parcels sent from Naples to booksellers Pezzana, Baseggio and Pitteri. Inside were many copies of the Neapolitan edition of Costantini’s *Lettere critiche*.²³ Furthermore, in an essay dedicated to the Neapolitan publisher Domenico Venaccia, who was also involved in the publishing of *letteratura*

22 The *supplica* is in ASV, *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova*, 362. It remains very scarce information on Giovanni Maria Lazzaroni, see Infelise, *L’editoria veneziana*, p. 142 and pp. 251–52.

23 Mario Infelise, ‘Gli scambi librari veneto-napoletani. Fonti e tendenze’, in *Editoria e cultura a Napoli nel XVIII secolo*, ed. by Anna Maria Rao (Naples: Liguori, 1998), pp. 237–50 (241).

amena, Anna Scannapieco hypothesizes that Venetian entrepreneurs on occasion might have commissioned pirated editions to be made in Naples.²⁴ Venetian novels were particularly affected by pirated editions.²⁵ The high number of pirated books of *letteratura amena* seized by Venetian *dogane* can be taken as evidence of the high demand for such products generated by the Venetian public. Editions of Venetian books pirated in those years in Parma or Naples are usually taken as evidence of the diffusion in the Italian peninsula of such works. Pasinelli's and Bassaglia's *supplica* in this sense points at a different interpretation. It suggests that the copies printed elsewhere – and in particular those coming from Naples – in this case were meant for the Venetian market, commissioned by Venetian entrepreneurs.

This element helps to formulate a hypothesis about the privileged addressee of the books of letters and *letteratura amena* in the urban public of Venice. A strong piece of evidence to strengthen this hypothesis can be found in the close relationship of these texts with the social context of Venice.²⁶ A first hint is given by Pasinelli himself in the *Avviso* to the second volume of the *Lettere*:

24 Anna Scannapieco, 'Un editore goldoniano nella Napoli del secondo Settecento', *Problemi di critica goldoniana*, 4 (1997), 1–152. A third example can be found in the double edition of Pietro Chiari's *L'uomo d'un altro mondo* (1768). The library of Museo Correr holds two copies of the novel with the same indication of place, date and publisher (Domenico Battifoco). However, the two copies differ in typographical quality. One has several features of popular printing: margins of the book are very narrow; the paper is of very poor quality. The quality of the other is higher, and more similar to Pasinelli's fine editions of novels by Chiari. Revealing information comes from the paper. The low-quality edition is most certainly the one made by Battifoco who also presents the book as his first endeavour as publisher of *letteratura amena*. It displays the *Riformatori's imprimatur* in its first pages. Finally, the watermark of the paper is commonly found in Venetian books. The watermark of the other on the other hand – a maltese cross – is the same as an edition of Chiari's *Il poeta* made by Parmesan publisher Filippo Carmignani in 1763. It can be hypothesized that Chiari or Pasinelli did not find Battifoco's edition good enough for the public the book was addressing. Thus, the request for a second edition of better quality made in Parma. The hypothesis of a relationship between Pasinelli and Carmignani has been expressed by Cappelletti, 'Un diluvio di romanzi perniciosi', 41–42, who however seems to dismiss the idea that a similar contact might exist between Chiari and Carmignani. On Battifoco's edition see Madrignani, *All'origine del romanzo*, pp. 258–59. On Carmignani see also Alberta Pettoello, 'La circolazione del libro nella Parma dei Borbone'.

25 Mario Infelise, 'Gli scambi librari', 242.

26 The most important study of these intertextual relationships, which focuses in particular on Chiari's and Piazza's novels, and especially the theatrical trilogies, is Tavazzi, *Il romanzo in gara*. This aspect will be further analysed in the next chapter.

Io non dovrei studiare la ragione di questo universale compiacimento; tuttavia è facile il riconoscerla in quel desiderio innato all'umanità di esaminare gli altrui difetti, e di vederli sferzati. L'intenzione però di chi fece questa raccolta non fu di pugnere, ma di curare.

This sentiment is also repeated by Costantini when introducing the third volume of the *Lettere* with Bassaglia (at that point of the dispute, the rights were still held by Pasinelli and Bassaglia had to change the title in *Nuova raccolta di lettere critiche etc.*). The lawyer wrote:

Siccome la pubblica compiacenza mi fece cuore a proseguire questa, dilla come più vuoi, o Raccolta, o fatica; puoi ben credere, che da forte ragione fui obbligato a prendere diverso mezzo per l'edizione di questo proseguimento. Avidità, e livore potrebbero unirsi, per produr maschere su questa Scena; ma la tua avvedutezza saprà distinguere i personaggj finti dalle figure reali. [...] Sij dunque avvertito della ragione del cambiamento; siccome spero, che sarai a quest'ora convinto dalle precedenti mie attenzione de miei veri oggetti, che sono di piacere, e di giovare, e non di pugnere.²⁷

Thus, the author suggests that the reader look at the 'general' ideas represented in the *Lettere*, rather than at the literal meaning which referred to 'figure reali'. The reference to 'avidità, e livore' – here directly linked to Pasinelli himself – triggered a further *supplica* by the bookseller to the *Riformatori*:

Mi viene à notizia, chè nella nuova spacciata di Lettere Critiche che vengono stampate da Piero Bassaglia stampatore di Venezia col nome del Co. Pupieni, che oltre le già licenziate ve ne siano altre in mano de' Spinisai che dice male deli stampatori con termini improprij, e dimostra senza nominarmi la Umilissima Persona di me Angiolo Pasinelli. VVEE che con il loro zelo vigilanza, e carità invigilano a togliere tutto quello che al buon costume delle stampe è contrario ... devano provvedere all'inconveniente, farsi presentare li

27 Giuseppe Antonio Costantini, *Nuova raccolta di lettere critiche, giocose, morali, scientifiche, ed erudite, alla moda, ed al gusto del Secolo presente, tradotte da varj linguaggi, e recate al toscano dal Conte Agostino Santi Pupieni* (Venice: Bassaglia, 1744), p. [vii].

manoscritti e [...] che esimano la mia persona e l'arte dei Librai da quelle espressioni che il nome e la riputazione pregiudicano. imploro ecc ecc.²⁸

The *supplica* implicitly refers to the important role played by the *revisori*, the censors appointed by the *Riformatori*. Far from limiting their work to ascertaining if books could be politically and morally acceptable (giving permission for their publication), sometimes they also stepped into the literary debates of the city. In this case, Pasinelli required the intervention of *revisori* to block this second part of the work (it is unclear if it was a further volume, or even the same volumes with a different text), which had not been checked, so that they could expurgate copies and defend his reputation.

What definitely took the conflict to a higher level was Pasinelli's publication in 1750 of the *Lettere scelte di varie materie piacevoli (...) ad una dama di qualità* by Pietro Chiari.²⁹ The clash started even before Chiari's work was published. It was once more Pietro Bassaglia, in another *supplica* to the *Riformatori*, who complained about the confusion between the titles of the two books:

Il Libraio Pietro Bassaglia umilmente espone all'autorità venerate di VVEE come al presente, il Librajo Angiolo Pasinelli sta stampando un primo tomo di Lettere Scritte dall'Abate Pietro Chiari Bresciano abitante in Venezia con questo titolo: Lettere Scelte Giocose Morali Critiche Scientifiche ed Erudite. [...] Ciò viene ad essere offensivo dell'interesse del suplicante, che ha il privilegio per quattro Tomi delle Lettere Critiche Giocose Morali Scientifiche ed Erudite di altro autore vivente. Vedendosi con impostura usati tutti li stessi titoli. Ciò è anche contrario al titolo posto a tali Lettere dall'Autore men che il Contratto fatto dal sign. Abb:te Antonio Schietti per nome del Chiari evidente in mano del Pasinelli dice Lettere Scelte ed Erudite come spica dall'acclusa Copia. Implora per tanto il Bassaglia da questo [aggettivo

28 ASV, *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova*, 362. The letter is dated 18 April 1744. I was unable to ascertain which of the two editions Pasinelli is referring to. Although Costantini's *Avviso* seems strong enough toward Pasinelli, it is also possible that there existed another *Avviso* even more aggressive than this.

29 Pietro Chiari, *Lettere scelte di varie materie piacevoli, critiche, ed erudite scritte ad una dama di qualità Dall'Abbate Pietro Chiari*, 2 vols (Venice: Pasinelli, 1750).

issimo] magistrato, che venga ritirato il mandato, e rilasciatone uno corrispondente al titolo con cui il Pasinelli fece acquisto del manoscritto. Grazie.³⁰

The *supplica* has no date, but it was probably written in August or September 1749. It is possible that in this case also the authorities intervened, asking Pasinelli to change the title. In fact, the *Mandato* recorded in the August by Pasinelli for this work has been modified by the *revisore*:

11 Agosto 1749, Anzolo Pasinelli, Venezia, Lettere Scelte [cancelled part not clear] Critiche Scientifiche [cancelled] ed erudite scritte ad una dama di qualità.

The letters were clearly written with polemical intent against Costantini, so that Costantini in 1751 published a seventh volume of *Lettere critiche* mainly to defend his work and attack the abbot.³¹ However, in the first edition, Pasinelli does not mention the ‘other’ *Lettere*, leaving the connection to the imagination, and knowledge, of readers. He explains that his decision to publish the *Lettere scelte* has been mainly caused by the appreciation of the public for these new works: ‘cognizione avendo del gusto universale d’oggi, conto assaissimo sull’universale gradimento’. However, it seems clear that there were already rumours about this work, as the bookseller refers to the ‘invidia’ and ‘maldicenza’ of which he would have been victim, and then closes asking the reader nothing but to judge the book after having read it:

Finalmente, acciocchè questo primo Tomo lusingarsi possa d’una benevola universale accoglienza; altra grazia non domando io a chi che sia, se non che

30 ASV, *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova*, 362. The contract mentioned in the *supplica* was copied at the end of it. It gives clearly the indication of *Lettere scelte*.

31 The story of the counter-publications is told in Francesco Antonio Zaccaria, *Storia letteraria d’Italia divisa in tre libri, il primo, e secondo de’ quali trattano de’ migliori libri usciti in Italia dal settembre 1748 fino al settembre 1749; contiene il terzo, importanti notizie di scuole introdotte, di musei, di osservazioni matematiche, di nuovi ritrovati, di scoperte anticaglie, di uomini illustri trapassati, e delle gesta loro*, 14 vols (Venice: Poletti, 1750–59), v (1753), pp. 662–64.

in vece di riportarsi alle relazioni degli altri, abbia egli da sè la degnazione, e la sofferenza di leggerlo; cosa disdicevole essendo, ed ignominiosa all’Uomo ragionevole, che giudicar deggia delle letterarie fatiche altrui, quel valersi alla cieca della satirica espressione di Persio: *Marcus dixit? ita est: obsigna, Marce, tabellas*.³²

It is possible that Pasinelli decided not to mention the intertextual relationship with Costantini’s work because it was already known by readers, or also (possibly) because he did not want to annoy the authorities with further polemics. However, in 1751, introducing the third edition of the *Lettere scelte*,³³ Pasinelli did give clear indications about the cross-references to the readers:

Fra le altre disgrazie accadute all’Autore, nella prima edizione da me fatta di queste sue Lettere, una fu quella, che avvertir gli feci io medesimo, di trovarsi alterate per modo le citazioni delle LETTERE CRITICHE impugnate da lui, che pareano cose inventate a capriccio. Lo sbaglio fu cagionato dalle differenti edizioni delle quali s’era servito; laonde, per non ricadere in simile inconveniente mai più, m’ha egli pregato ad avvisare i Leggitori benevoli, che nell’Edizione presente, dovunque si parla di LETTERE CRITICHE, se n’è adoperata quella edizione che fu fatta nel 1748, avendo avuto la mira di regolare sulla medesima tutte le citazioni già fatte da lui.³⁴

The editions of the *Lettere* and the large success they had in Venice proved to publishers how the urban public of the city could determine the fortune of their editions. But exactly what sort of public was the Venetian one? What kind of people would enjoy Chiari’s or Costantini’s *Lettere*? The answer to this question is essential also in understanding what kind of public the novels reached, as the readership of these two genres often coincided. The publishing history of the *Lettere*, and the long

32 Pietro Chiari, *Lettere scelte di varie materie piacevoli, critiche, ed erudite scritte ad una dama di qualità Dall’Abbate Pietro Chiari Bresciano*, 2 vols (Venice: Pasinelli, 1750–51), I, pp. [xi–xii].

33 ‘Io non ho motivo di rimproverar a me stesso d’aver fatto al Pubblico un cattivo regalo, presentandogli questo corpo di LETTERE SCELTE; se nel breve giro di un anno sono stato obbligato di farne una terza edizione, qual è la presente’, Chiari, *Lettere scelte di varie materie piacevoli, critiche, ed erudite scritte ad una dama di qualità Dall’Abbate Pietro Chiari Bresciano*, 3rd edn, 2 vols (Venice: Pasinelli, 1751), I, pp. [iii–iv].

34 Chiari, *Lettere scelte*, I, p. [iii].

dispute that arose from it, can help to delineate a first image of the readers, which will be useful to compare with evidence taken from novels.

As already mentioned, the public came mostly from the city of Venice. This does not exclude the existence of a public of readers in Veneto or in other Italian (and foreign) cities. It certainly means, though, that the first addressee of such works was the Serenissima and its lively cultural and social life.

With the term, social life, I refer mainly to that of the upper classes. The *Lettere* insistently refer to a relatively small world used to *conversation*, and in certain ways, the texts can even be used as ‘manuals’ for conversation.³⁵ The hypothesis is precisely that these books were addressing (and referring to) a group of people belonging to the Venetian élite. Persons who could recognise the references to the ‘real’ figures presented in the texts, but also people who could afford the cost of the volumes: in one of Pasinelli’s catalogues of 1754, Costantini’s seven volumes cost fourteen *lire*, Chiari’s three volumes – here significantly called ‘Contro-critiche del Chiari’ – were not extremely expensive, but certainly a price which not everybody in Venice could afford. The issue of price is particularly important in identifying the primary addressee of this kind of literature; it is therefore worth considering this aspect in detail.

35 This aspect has already been highlighted by Gilberto Pizzamiglio talking about Costantini: ‘scorrendo il volume si vede però che la scelta dei temi è dettata più dalle opportunità di conversazioni alla moda che non da un progetto sistematico di rappresentazione vagamente enciclopedica’, Pizzamiglio, ‘Le fortune del romanzo’, p. 175.

In a seminal article on the consumption of culture in London, Robert D. Hume used an approach typical of the history of economics to compare the price of cultural products and the cost of living during the eighteenth-century. Hume establishes his point of view by considering ‘culture [as] a commodity produced for gain (whether pecuniary or otherwise) and offered for sale to the public, with or without success’.³⁶ What emerges from such a comparison is that access to these products was rather limited – comparing it with the average income of Londoners, only families and individuals of independent means could have access to them.³⁷

Hume’s approach can be fruitfully applied to eighteenth century Venetian novels and *letteratura amena*, comparing their prices to the average cost of living. In order to do so, we should establish not only how much a novel (or other books of *letteratura amena*) could cost, and how high (or low) the price is compared to the average cost of living.³⁸ It is also useful to compare the price of other genres, and cultural products, such as theatre or the Opera.

Table 1 shows the catalogue of Pasinelli’s bookshop in 1761. The list includes both works published by the bookseller in previous years, and by others.³⁹

36 Robert D. Hume, ‘The Economics of Culture in London, 1660–1740’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 69 (2006), 487–533. A similar approach, also quoted by Hume, is that used in William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); see also William St Clair, ‘But What Did We Actually Read? Literary Critics Should Not Lose Sight of the Sales Figures’, *TLS – Times Literary Supplement*, 12 May 2006, p. 13.

37 Hume, ‘The Economics of Culture’, 492–500.

38 The same comparison has been made by Antonelli, *Alle radici*, pp. 36–38.

39 The price of books is indicated in *lire:soldi*. The currency system followed in Venice was non-decimal (and similar to the British): 12 *piccoli* (or *danari*) made 1 *soldo*; 20 *soldi* made 1 *lira*. Above the *lira* was the *ducato corrente*, which at this time had a nominal value of 6:4 *lire*. These currencies were the most common in everyday business. The golden coin was the *zecchino*, valued during the eighteenth century at 22 *lire*. On book catalogues see for instance Stefania Bergamo and Marco Callegari, *Libri in vendita: cataloghi librari nelle biblioteche padovane (1647-1850)* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2009). See also Canelos, ‘“Con libri alla mano”’, 166–72.

Table 1. Pasinelli's book catalogue (1761)			
	Size	vols	Lire:soldi
<i>Alexandri Natalis</i> Historia Ecclesiastica Veteris, Novique Testamenti	fol.	8	260
<i>Antonii Rebusello</i> Oratio in funere Antonii Vairae Episcopi Adriensis	4.		1
<i>Alagona</i> Comp. D. Thomae	12.		3
Attilio Regolo, Opera del Metastasio non più stampata	12.		1
Cristiano Lupo concilii	fol.	12	140
Considerazione efficacissima sopra il male che apporta all'Anima il peccato	24.		–:10
Cinque porte del Paradiso aperte nelle cinque Piaghe di Cristo	24.		–:10
Compendio della Storia Ecclesiastica del Sig. Ab. Langlet Dufresnoy.	12.	2	4
Demonstrationes Pithanophilanae in Libro Probabilismus	8.		1
Seconda lettera di risposta all'Anonimo Autore dell'Opera <i>Moralium actionum</i>	8.		1:10
Domenicale del P. Niccola di Dijone Cappuccino.	4.	2	13
<i>Dominici Lazzarini</i> Oratio in funere Fortunati Mauroceni Episcopi Brixienensis	4.		1
Doppia Corona di gigli, e spine. Operetta del P. <i>Tinelli</i> della Comp. di Gesù	24.		–:15
Decamerone del <i>Boccaccio</i> giusta l'Edizione di Firenze del Giunti dell'anno 1527			176
Discorsi Accademici d' <i>Antonio Maria Salvini</i> [Carta fina]	4.	3	20
Delle obblazioni all'Altare. Dissertazione Storico Teologica di Francesco Berlendis	4.		6:10
De substantiali Mutatione &c. Auctore Fr. Julio Antonio Sangallo Min. Conv.	8.		2
D. <i>Bernardi</i> Opera omnia cum Notis Horstii & Mabillonii.	fol.	3	65
Della Passione del Figlio di Dio del P. <i>Gian Francesco Durazzo</i>			5
Frutti cavati dalli 7. Dolori della Regina de' Mart.			1
Gran Teatro Storico	4.	8	40
Geometria pratica sul Piano, e sul Terreno del Sig. Le Clerc [con num. 191. figure in Rame.]	12.	2	8
Gramatica, e Prosodia <i>Porretti</i>	12.	2	2
<i>Goundin</i> Philosophia	12.	4	6
Index Doxibus Medicamentorum	4.		5
Indice de' Medicamenti del Mantov	8.		1:10
Il Canzoniere d'Orazio ridotto in versi Toscani	8.		8
Lettere Critiche, Morali, e Scientifiche alla Moda, ed al gusto del Secolo presente in questa ultima edizione, con molte aggiunte dell'Autore	8.	8	26
[con tre Tomi di Critica alle medesime, in tutti tomi 11.]			
detta Critica separata		3	1
Mondo ingannato da' Falsi Medici	8.		2
Novena della SS. Annunziata	24.		–:15

— detta del SS. Natale del P. Zucchi della Comp. di Gesù.	12.		—:15
— detta di S. Gio: Nepomuceno	12.		—:15
— detta di S. Francesco d’Assisi, opera d’un Padre della Comp. di Gesù.	16.		—:12
<i>Ovidii Trist. & Pont. cum notis Minelli</i>	12.	2	3
Opere Latine, e Italiane di M. Gio: della Casa con varie aggiunte	4.	3	15
<i>Pensées Chretiennes pour tous les jours du mois</i>	24.		1
Principj della Storia per educazione della Gioventù, [...] Langlet du Fresnoy.	12.	8	20
<i>Palatii Fastis Cardinalium</i>		5	70
Riflessioni Critiche sopra i costumi del <i>Bellegard</i>		3	5
Statuto Veneto Edizione novissima	4.	2	26
Vita di S. Girolamo del P. Giuseppe Renato			3
— di S. Agostino del detto			4
‘Da Angelo Pasinelli si vendono i seguenti stampati libri a prezzo di contanti Moneta Veneta’ in Pietro Chiari, <i>La viaggiatrice in fortuna</i> , 2 vols (Venice: Pasinelli, 1761), I.			

Titles in the catalogue include part of Pasinelli’s production since the 1720s. They can be divided into three groups. The first includes expensive editions of erudition and religious literature such as Alexandre Noël’s *Historia Ecclesiastica Veteris*,⁴⁰ or the *facsimile* of a *Decameron giuntina*.⁴¹ Both titles are incredibly expensive: eight volumes in folio of Noël’s *Historia* came to six months rent of Pasinelli’s bookshop; the *Decameron* to three months rent of the same shop, but this time the price is for a single volume.⁴² Others, such as Salvini’s *Discorsi accademici*, or Imhof’s *Gran teatro storico*⁴³ belong to the same group. They are relatively less expensive compared to those quoted before, but their price remains extremely high.

A second group of titles is composed by less expensive books of medium quality, mainly composed of classical and traditional literature (Horace; Della Casa),

40 On this specific publication, see Infelise, *L’editoria veneziana*, 72–73.

41 It had been published by Pasinelli in 1729, most certainly with the financial support of a ‘capitalista’: the financial situation of Pasinelli would have made it impossible for him to meet the expenses for a similar edition.

42 Pasinelli paid 70 *ducati* (458 lire) for the annual rent of his bookshop, and the same sum for his house. See Federico Montecuccoli degli Erri, ‘Venezia 1745–1759. Case (e botteghe) di pittori, mercanti di quadri, incisori, scultori, architetti, musicisti, librai, stampatori ed altri personaggi veneziani’, *Ateneo Veneto*, ns, 36 (1998), 63–140.

43 Andreas von Imhof, *Gran teatro storico o sia Storia universale sacra e profana: dalla creazione del mondo sino al principio del decimo ottavo secolo*, 7 vols (Venice: Albrizzi and Viezzieri, 1735–38).

essays and treatises addressing students of different degrees (*Geometria Pratica*; Goundin's *Philosophia*, etc.). The price for this kind of literature varied, but they were generally more affordable than the previous ones.

A third group is represented by editions of religious literature of small size and very cheap prices such as the *novene* sold at 15 *soldi*, or the *Cinque porte del Paradiso* for 10. These are of course items of wide circulation⁴⁴ which had an extremely low price compared to others: their cost went from 1 *lira* to as low as 1.5 *soldi*.⁴⁵

Finally, the catalogue includes Giuseppe Costantini's *Lettere critiche*, which at that time (1761) had already reached its eightieth volume. Its cost was 26 *lire* or 3:5 per volume. It is the only example of *letteratura amena* present in the list other than Bellegarde's *Riflessioni critiche*. People interested in that kind of literature in Pasinelli's shop however, would find it in a separate list. Since the 1750s this catalogue included available books of *letteratura amena*, mainly works by Chiari's published by the bookseller; a list which might or might not be followed by a further section of 'romanzi di altri autori'.

44 I borrow this term from 'letteratura a larga diffusione', now commonly used by Italian scholars instead of 'popular literature'. The definition aims to avoid the ambiguity created by the word 'popular'. As Laura Carnelos points out: 'il libro "popolare" non è l'opposto del libro dotto, né ciò che è letto dal popolo, e nemmeno rappresenta la cultura o la mentalità dei ceti dominate. Non è una parola connessa alle gerarchie sociali e, quindi, ad un tipo di pubblico, né uno specifico repertorio letterario', Laura Carnelos, *I libri da risma. Catalogo delle edizioni Remondini a larga diffusione (1650-1850)* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2008), p. 9. These works were diffused among all social strata, not only the lower classes: '[Letteratura a larga diffusione] implica da un lato un aumento dei lettori in senso verticale (venivano coinvolte più fasce sociali) ed orizzontale (più utenti per ogni piolo della scala sociale), dall'altro una specializzazione editoriale che si concretizzava nella messa in atto di determinate strategie di produzione e diffusione della merce', Carnelos, *I libri da risma*, p. 12. For an overview see also *Libri per tutti*, ed. by Braida, Infelise and Bacci.

45 The price for *Anima in traccia del suo ultimo fine con la scorta della Fede*, was 3 *soldi* for a bound version, and less than 1.5 *soldi* unbound, Carnelos, *I libri da risma*, p. 10.

Table 2. Catalogue of Chiari's works by Angelo Pasinelli (1761)			
	Size	vols	Lire:soldi
[Chiari] <i>Lettere scelte</i> contro le <i>Lettere Critiche</i> dell'Avvocato Costantini	8.	3	6
Commedie			
Per il Teatro Grimani in prosa tomi 4.	12.		10
Il Tomo quarto separato.			3
Dette in versi tomi 7.			24:10
Si Stampa il Tomo 8.			3:10
Romanzi			
La Filosofessa italiana	8.	4	9
Tomo quarto separato.			2:10
La Ballerina Onorata	8.	2	4
La Cantatrice per disgrazia	8.	2	5
La commediante in Fortuna	8.	2	4
Memorie del Barone di Trenck	8.	1	2:10
Il Poeta	8.	3	7
La Giuocatrice di Lotto	8.	1	2.10
La Zingana Memorie Egiziane	8.	2	5
La Francese in Italia	8.	2	5
La Viaggiatrice	8.	2	5
Si stampa la Bella Pellegrina	8.	2	5
Varie altre operette			
Epistole Poetiche ad alcuni Letterati Modonesi	8.	1	1:10
Raccolta di Prologhi in Verso per il Teatro S. Angelo		1	2
Raccolta di Componimenti Poetici		1	1
L'Uomo Lettere Filosofiche	8.	1	1:10
La Filosofia per tutti. Lettere scientifiche	8.	1	2:10
Il Festino d'Amore. Ottave per le Nozze del N. H. Contarini colla N.D. Venier	4.	1	–:15
Dispaccio di ser Ticucculia a chi scrisse il congresso di Parnasso		1	1
Source: 'Opere da me stampate dell'abate Pietro Chiari' in Pietro Chiari, <i>La viaggiatrice in fortuna</i> (Venice, Pasinelli, 1761), I.			

Titles in this list are generally less expensive compared with books of the first group in Table 1. The most common price for a single volume, especially for novels, is 2:10 (or 2.5 *lire*). Collections of plays were slightly more expensive, with the recently published volumes of *commedie in versi* priced 3:10 (or 3.5 *lire*) per volume.

Interestingly enough, the price of novels does not vary over the decades, regardless of whether the book is new, a reprint, or an old publication. In a catalogue of novels attached to *Eugenia, o sia il momento fatale* published by Gian Maria

Bassaglia in 1785,⁴⁶ the average price for Chiari's novels is almost the same 2:10 (or 2.5 *lire*).⁴⁷

Through subscription, a customer could get a lower price for these books. For instance, a customer buying Chiari's *La bella pellegrina* through subscription would save a *lira* on the original price.⁴⁸ This practice allowed for a reduction in the cost of publication, and in the risk for the printer or bookseller. In some cases (such as with Chiari with *La bella pellegrina*; and more frequently in Piazza's activity) authors used this practice as a form of self-publishing.

From these numbers it is clear that novels and other books of *letteratura amena* stood in between expensive editions which only a few people could actually afford; and the cheapest products aimed at a wider diffusion. Limiting the comparison to other books however can be misleading: as already mentioned, some of them cost a fortune and very few persons could afford them. A proper comparison with contemporary costs of living can be done by looking at Table 3 and Table 4.⁴⁹

46 Antonio Piazza, *Eugenia o sia il momento fatale* (Venice: Gian Maria Bassaglia, 1785). The copy with the catalogue is held at the Library of Museo Correr, Venice, collected in a miscellaneous volume including another two novels [Op. P. D. 232].

47 Antonio Piazza's works in the same catalogue cost relatively less, but the main difference between the two authors is that most of Piazza's are single-volume novels; while Chiari's production is mainly composed of multi-volume works.

48 To encourage subscribers, in the *Gazzetta* Chiari had set the final price for non-subscribers to 6 *lire*, against the 4 *lire* for those who paid in advance for both volumes. It is impossible to say if the price of 5 *lire* indicated in Pasinelli's catalogue at this point (this time the bookseller was not responsible for the publication, as Chiari had published it on his own) is a mistake, or for some reason the price was actually reduced despite the original announcement. See *Gazzetta veneta*, n. 35, 10 June 1761.

49 The same calculation has been made by Antonelli, *Alle radici*, pp. 36–38, quoted above. Antonelli based the analysis mostly on data provided by Marino Berengo, *La società veneta alla fine del Settecento: ricerche storiche* (Florence: Sansoni, 1956), pp. 43–87; whose main source was Daniele Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione di Venezia dalla fine del secolo XVI alla caduta della Repubblica* (Padua: CEDAM, 1954). Prices here are based also on more recent publications, in particular those made by Infelise in 'Il mercato dei libri (XVII-XVIII secolo)'.

Table 3. Monthly wages and allowances in Venice, second half of the 18 th century ⁵⁰	
	<i>Lire:soldi</i>
Waiter	31
Baker	38:48
Textile worker (min)	24
Textile worker (max)	48
Typographer	65
Gondoleer of the Pisani family	93:5
Monthly income of notary or doctor	155-206
Monthly allowance of Sebastiano Venier (1776)	154

Table 4. Cost of living in Venice, second half of the 18 th century ⁵¹	
Goods	<i>Lire:soldi</i>
2 chickens	3
100 eggs	5
Annual rent (poor-modest house)	75-248
Annual rent paid by Pasinelli for his house (1945) and shop	458 + 458
<i>Staro</i> of wheat ⁵²	25:12
1 small slab of botargo	3
8-10 herrings	1
1 kg of wheat (1750-59)	—:5.87
1 kg of bread	—:11
1 cup of coffee	—:5
1 cup of chocolate	—:15

For instance, Chiari's two volume novel *La francese in Italia* – at the average size and price for novels of the 1750s – cost about a sixth of the monthly wage for a

50 *Sources*: Mario Infelise, 'Il mercato dei libri (XVII-XVIII secolo)', p. 431. Sebastiano Venier's monthly allowance –7 *zecchini* – is indicated in Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, p. 308. For the wages of textile workers: Berengo, *La società veneta*, p. 62.

51 *Sources*: Infelise, 'Il mercato dei libri (XVII-XVIII secolo)'; Montecuccoli degli Erri, 'Venezia 1745-1759. Case (e botteghe)'; Carmelo Ferlito, 'Per un'analisi del costo della vita nella Verona del Settecento', *Studi storici "Luigi Simeoni"*, 56 (2006), 631–88; Francesco Zorzi Muazzo, *Raccolta de' proverbii, detti, sentenze, parole e frasi veneziane, arricchita d'alcuni esempi ed istorielle*, ed. by Franco Crevatin (Vicenza: Colla, 2008), p. 93; Cesare Musatti, 'Il conticino d'un caffettiere veneziano nel Settecento', *Ateneo Veneto*, 35 (1909), 125–129.

52 The average price for a *Staro* of wheat is related to Bassano del Grappa, not Venice. In the capital prices were more expensive. See Ferlito, 'Per un'analisi del costo della vita'.

waiter, and a fifth for a baker.⁵³ It would have been almost impossible for them (and therefore for the vast majority of the city's population) to afford such expenses, especially considering that food constituted at least 70% of total family expenses in a family of workers. Rent would probably have cut away the rest of it.⁵⁴

Following Beltrami's data,⁵⁵ Berengo calculates 300 *lire* as the minimum yearly wage for a worker 'che non abbia sensibili carichi di famiglia e debba provvedere ad un vitto modestissimo per sé solo'.⁵⁶ Even considering that citizens of Venice lived in better conditions – and higher wages – than those living in the Venetian State, it is almost impossible that people with such incomes would constitute the core of the public for novels and *letteratura amena*.

A gondolier of the *Pisani* family – one of the richest and most powerful aristocratic families of the city – could in theory afford such an expense, although it would still be a significant drain on his income. Moreover, the number of gondoliers with such an income was certainly small, being limited to those families (not exclusively aristocratic) that could afford to pay such high wages. The average salary for a normal gondolier was probably lower than that, and closer to that of other workers. The purchase of a book might in theory have been possible for a skilled worker such as a printer or typographer, if his financial conditions were good enough, and he did not have other expenses. In any case, the limited possibilities of people with this level of income suggest that their access to such products would have been, for the most part, occasional, and it would have been difficult for them to become habitual consumers of these products.

53 A similar calculation has been made by Laura Carnelos to show that wide circulation literature was more easily accessible to the lower classes. For a baker of Casa Pisani (earning 5 *lire* per week), a bound copy of *Anima in traccia del suo ultimo fine con la scorta della Fede* equalled 85% of his daily income; an unbound copy about 40%. Carnelos, *Libri da risma*, p. 11.

54 See Ferlito, 'Per un'analisi del costo della vita', p. 38. Rent prices can be found in Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione di Venezia*. See also Berengo, *La società veneta*, p. 62.

55 Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione di Venezia*, pp. 217–28.

56 Berengo, *La società veneta*, pp. 86–87.

Those certainly able to afford these books were people with an income of 150 *lire* per month⁵⁷ or above; people with a significant amount of money at their disposal, which could be dedicated to meeting secondary expenses. Sebastiano Venier's monthly allowance in Table 3 is a case in point: the sum does not include most living expenses, such as board and lodging, transportation, and servants, all provided from the family's fund shared with his married brother.⁵⁸ This means that a good amount of money could have been used for, among other commodities, entertainment and cultural consumption.⁵⁹

Of course, not all cultural products of the city were so expensive. Table 5 indicates the average cost of some cultural products during the eighteenth-century in Venice. Tickets for the comedy were the most affordable, and therefore not limited only to the *élite*. However, prices varied depending on genre (with *Opera seria* being much more expensive) and *within* the theatre. 15 *soldi* for the last night of Carnival (perhaps the most sought-after shows of the entire season) was only for admission. More money was required for a seat in the parterre. Moreover, higher classes used to sit in boxes, the *palchetti*. Therefore, cultural consumption could be differentiated even for the same product. Annual rent of an elegant box in the S. Salvatore theatre equalled a month of income for a doctor, or a notary.

57 The number is, of course, indicative. A larger family, and additional costs would further reduce the possibility of access even for people on this income.

58 Venier's brothers lived in *fraterna*. It was a typical practice in Venetian aristocracy made to protect the family estate. Only one son had to marry and inherit the family's estate, while others were either provided with a life annuity, or had to choose other careers. In the *fraterna*, unmarried brother and sisters remained living in the same house with their married brother. On this see Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano* and Paola Lanaro, 'Fedecommissi, doti, famiglia'.

59 Sebastiano was in charge of administering the family's estate: 'che si dimostra alieno del tutto dalle domestiche cure e sollecitudini, doverà con amorosa fraterna intelligenza avere il peso dell'amministrazione di tutte le rendite della casa', Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, p. 308. The allowance was probably used also to cover other expenses: for example, the rent of a *casino*, the expenses for *villeggiatura*. But money was also used to sustain a political career, in a form of 'conspicuous consumption' (Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, p. 310) which was typical among Venetian aristocrats of the richest groups.

Table 5. Cultural consumption ⁶⁰	
Ticket for Opera seria	≤4
Ticket for Opera buffa	–:30 to –:50
Ticket for a comedy in the S. Moisè theatre in the last day of Carnival	–:15
Annual rent of a box in the Teatro S. Salvatore	186

Price comparisons help to narrow the habitual consumer of novels and *letteratura amena* to the élite of the city. Further evidence relating to social habits of élites, comes from archival evidence about the publication of Chiari's novels. As mentioned before, every title published in the city had to be recorded in a specific register held by the Guild of printers and booksellers. A summary of Pasinelli's records of Chiari's novels made between 1753 and 1761 is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. <i>Mandati di stampa</i> of Chiari's novels published by Pasinelli, 1753-1761 ⁶¹		
1753	<i>La filosofessa italiana</i>	(Vol I) Mand. 423, 2 February 1753, MS, Pivati; (Vols II-III): Mand. 6, 1 March 1754, MS, Pivati.
1754	<i>La ballerina onorata</i>	Mand. n. 67, 15 May 1753, MS, Pivati.
1755	<i>La cantatrice per disgrazia</i>	(Vol I) Mand. n. 151, 21 August 1753, MS, Pivati; (Vol II) Mand. n. 328, 2 April 1754, MS, Pivati.
1755	<i>La commediante in fortuna</i>	Mand. n. 13, 29 March 1755, MS, Calogera.
1756	<i>La filosofessa italiana</i>	(Vol IV) in Mand. n. 304, 12 May 1756, Calogera.
1757	<i>La giuocatrice di Lotto</i>	Mand. n. 29, 15 April 1757, MS, Calogera.
1758	<i>La Zingana</i>	Mand. n. 107, 25 July 1757, Calogera.
1760	<i>La francese in Italia</i>	(Vol I) Mand. n. 44, 22 May 1759, MS, Calogera. (Vol II) Mand. n. 56, 3 June 1759, MS, Calogera.
1760	<i>La viaggiatrice</i>	(Vol I) Mand. n. 312, 24 May 1760, MS, Pivati. (Vol II) 27 August 1760, Pivati.

For bibliographical purposes, the *Mandati* can be an extraordinary source of information. They record the date (day, month and year) in which the new title was presented, the name of the censor, and in some cases, if the work had been presented

60 Sources: Taddeo Wiel, *I teatri musicali veneziani del settecento: catalogo delle opere in musica rappresentate nel secolo XVIII in Venezia (1701-1800)* (Venice: Visentini, 1897), pp. li, lxxvi; *Gazzetta Veneta*, n. 4, 21 February 1761.

61 Source: ASV, *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova*, 340–341.

in manuscript form, or printed (invaluable information for tracking down first editions).

What is particularly interesting in the list of Chiari's novels is the time of year in which they were recorded. Pasinelli recorded most of Chiari's novels between April and May. Only in two cases are records made slightly later (in July, for *La zingana*) or earlier (February-March, for *La filosofessa italiana*). Considering that *revisori* had to read the final version of each work, we may hypothesize that between the record and the publication, not much time elapsed. The months of registration immediately preceded the élites holiday: the *villeggiatura*. This was divided into two main periods: the first began in mid-June, and lasted until the mid of July; the second went from mid-September to mid-November. These were important moments in the life of the Venetian élite, for aristocrats⁶² but more generally for all who could afford it.⁶³

These publishing choices of Pasinelli (and Chiari) call to mind commercial practices still used today, as summer vacations are a time of increased activity for publishing houses. This could be dismissed as coincidence, if not for an article written by Pietro Chiari published when he was editor of the *Gazzetta Veneta*, in

62 'La villeggiatura infatti rivestiva un ruolo di primo piano in quella che era la vita quotidiana del patrizio veneto, nei suoi desideri, nelle sue priorità economiche, culturali e sociali', Piergiovanni Mometto, 'La vita in villa', in *Storia della cultura veneta*, ed. by Arnaldo and Pastore Stocchi, v/1, 607–29.

63 Piazza's titles recorded in the *Mandati* for instance do not seem to follow a precise seasonal pattern. For instance, when he announces *Il merlotto spennacchiato* he explains that it will be published 'nei primi giorni del Carnovale' as it is a book proper 'per una stagione ch'assai bene corrisponde alla materia trattata in esso', Antonio Piazza, *Il merlotto spennacchiato, o sia la storia piacevole del Conte Enea P... Friulano* (Venice: Savioni, 1767) quoted in Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 18. But in this case, the justification seems more related to the general tone and content of the book 'intreccio di avvenimenti ridicoli che potranno servire d'onesto divertimento a tutti quelli che si diletteranno di Libri di tal sorta', and does not seem to have commercial reasons expressed by Chiari.

On the other hand, the reference to the season of carnival still points to a specific public (the urban one) as a privileged addressee, while the price of the book (2:10, or 2.5 *lire*) corresponds to the average price already discussed, which still partially excludes people with a low income as the primary addressees. The difference can also be given by Piazza's different position as an author. His strategies and activity as an author were different from Chiari's. Piazza could not enjoy the visibility granted to the other by his work in theatres nor, as it will be seen in the next chapter, did publishers trust the younger novelist as they did Chiari.

1761. In number 35 (Wednesday, 10 June), the abbot answered a letter from an anonymous reader. The reader had complained that the novel he had announced the year before, *La bella pellegrina*, had not been published yet. Chiari replied:

Prima di tutto a questo tale io rispondo, che se sapesse tutte lo occupazioni mie aspetterebbe il Romanzo suddetto con più sofferenza. *In secondo luogo s'è fatti Libri pubblicare li deggio in quelle stagioni, che giudico più opportune: e li riservo però ordinariamente al tempo delle villeggiature, in cui tanti desiderano qualche Libro novello da passar con diletto le ore più oziose del giorno.* Per ultimo, sia questo tale sicuro, che alla fine del venturo Luglio avrà egli, e chiunque lo brama il primo Volume della Bella Pellegrina, e dentro l'Agosto susseguente ne avrà il secondo; perocchè non c'è il caso di pubblicarli più presto. La novità, e la vaghezza di questo Romanzo supplirà, io lo spero, alla di lui tardanza; e quelli stessi, che si lagnano d'averlo tanto aspettato non si lagneranno assolutamente d'averlo letto, ed onorato del loro compatimento.⁶⁴

Thus, Chiari recognises openly that novels were published specifically for the time of *villeggiatura*, when people had free time to spend reading 'con diletto'. Consequently, having lost the opportunity to publish it before the first *villeggiatura*, the publication of the new novel is planned at the end of July (the first volume) and in August (the second volume),⁶⁵ precisely when people had returned to Venice from their villas, or were preparing to leave again.

Another possible example of the addressee of *letteratura amena* which an author could have had in mind, comes from an episode of Chiari's career, in the early years in which he published novels. I refer to it mainly as a challenge against the interpretation of these books as literature for the *volgo*. Between 1752 and 1753, the abbot had been made poet laureate by Francesco III d'Este, Duke of Modena, and

⁶⁴ *Gazzetta Veneta*, n. 35, 10 June 1761.

⁶⁵ The record of *La bella pellegrina* in the *mandati* corresponds to Chiari's announcement: the first volume dated the 21 July 1761 (n. 292, MS, Baroni), the second volume 9 August 1761 (n. 324, MS, Baroni), see ASV, *Arti*: 341. Unlike all previous ones, this novel was printed by Pietro Marcuzzi, who was also the publisher of the *Gazzetta*.

Chiari tried to get the most from this honourable position.⁶⁶ There is much evidence of his attempts, including some related to the novel. The path was a delicate one, as it was not seen as a genre meant for any kind of high-ranked dedication. However, Chiari would have probably tried to do it, as he had already done with plays, and poetry. In two short poems addressed to the chambermaid of the duchess of Modena, and written to accompany his novels *La filosofessa* (the first), *La Cantatrice* and *La ballerina* (the second), Chiari plays with an open secret: the Duchess is the indirect addressee of both novels and poem, even though of course it cannot be said.⁶⁷ Etiquette prohibited addressing the Duchess, especially in a poem about novels, but between the lines it is clear that it is precisely the Duchess who is directly addressed. If he had only known when writing the *Filosofessa* that he would have been honoured by a role in court, he would have made a portrait of the Duchess in the novel so that she could have found herself reading it:

Di sue virtù moltissime in esso avrebbe ei fatto
 Con più purgati inchiostri lo splendido ritratto.
 Così da un stil, che mai gloria simil non ebbe,
 Specchiandosi in se stessa qualche piacer ne avrebbe.⁶⁸

In the second poem the suspicion that the Duchess would read his novels is still present, though in a negative sentence: ‘Se la Donna Regale sdegnà mirarle in viso, |

66 Francesco III d’Este and his wife, Charlotte Aglae D’Orleans, stayed for a while in Venice in their exile during the war for the Austrian succession. Francesco (and probably Charlotte) had visited the city again in 1749. ‘Avendogli poscia scritto il nostro Proposto nel 1749. Lettera di congratulazione pel suo felice arrivo a Venezia [...]’, Gian Francesco Muratori, *Vita del proposto Lodovico Antonio Muratori* (Venice: Pasquali, 1756), p. 229. The visit is recorded also in periodicals and other publications. The meeting of the Duke and Duchess with Chiari almost certainly happened on this occasion.

67 Carlotta Aglae D’Orleans lived for many years in France, and was known for her passion for entertainment and other pleasures. Theatre and literature flourished in the years in which the Court had the chance to sit in Modena, thanks to her influence. On Charlotte D’Orleans see for instance Jean Vatout, *Le chateau d’Eu: notices historiques*, 5 vols (Paris: Malteste, 1836), IV, 438–42.

68 Pietro Chiari and others, *Della vera poesia teatrale, epistole poetiche di alcuni letterati modanesi dirette al signor abate Pietro Chiari colle risposte del medesimo* (Modena: Soliani, 1754), p. 81.

Voi me ne date almeno qualche segreto avviso'.⁶⁹ Of course, the Duchess of Modena is not exactly a 'plebea donnicciola' as Baretti would have put it. And the implicit references hidden in the poem, recognisable despite the delicacy of the genre, lend support to the hypothesis that Chiari, at least at this point, looked at the novel as a genre addressed to people from the highest ranks.⁷⁰

All the elements discussed until now point to a primary, privileged addressee targeted by publishers (and authors), belonging to the urban élite of Venice: one of whose characteristics is certainly its close relationship with the cultural life of the city, a relationship which remained alive throughout the second half of the eighteenth century.

In fact, the controversies which arose about the *Lettere* emerged again, and more violently, in the following decade, which is characterised, on the one hand, by the 'war of theatres' between Chiari, Goldoni and Gozzi; and on the other hand, by the appearance of novels in the book market. The polemics of this period should be carefully taken into account, as they have nothing of the usual *querelles* typical of the intellectual élite. In the new debates, the public had a pivotal role. This was clearly understood not only by authors, but also by entrepreneurs. If Pasinelli had perhaps already foreseen such power when dealing with Costantini's and Chiari's *Lettere*, it was through novels and theatre that this clash – which reverberates in periodicals, books and plays, but even more in cafés, houses and salons – became a way to win readers for new works.

69 Chiari and others, *Della vera poesia teatrale*, p. 82.

70 The most famous example of the novel addressing a high-ranking person, is certainly Fénelon and his *Télémaque*, which was written for the education of a young prince by his tutor. Not surprisingly though, it was a model for Chiari's vision of this genre.

2. A new public and its enemies

Readers and spectators: theatre and translations

After the publication of the *Lettere scelte*, the career of the bookseller Angelo Pasinelli and that of the emerging author Pietro Chiari became increasingly bound together, creating a partnership which grew stronger with the abbot's increasing success.¹ After his experience with Costantini, Pasinelli appears to have changed his attitude toward the authors he worked with and found a compromise which helped him to preserve such relationships.²

Although their partnership was not exclusive – Chiari worked also with other Venetian entrepreneurs during this period – Pasinelli published the majority of the abbot's production, including not only novels, but also comedies, tragedies, and various anthologies of poetry and prose.

Between the end of the 1740s and the 1750s, the Venetian book market was characterized by the increasing presence of novels – original and translated – and theatre plays for the stage (more specifically, comedies). The parallel success of these two forms was also reflected in the lively exchange which reverberated in texts in different ways, such as intertextual referencing and adaptation. In this sense, the success of novels and plays provides evidence of the complex cultural network which

1 Further evidence of Chiari's fame includes the frequent publication of specific catalogues, usually entitled 'opere scritte dall'abate Pietro Chiari, e da me stampate' that Pasinelli included at the end of his books, like the one mentioned in the previous chapter.

2 Unfortunately, it was not possible to find any documents regarding the agreements between them. The only exception is a note provided by Pasinelli in the lawsuit with Costantini, where the sum given to Chiari for the first volume of his *Lettere critiche* is indicated.

involved producers (such as actors, agents, playwrights, publishers) and the various, stratified publics of the city.³

1749 was a turning point in the careers of both Chiari and Pasinelli. Chiari's *entrée* into literary (and worldly) Venetian life with the *Lettere scelte* was associated, the same year, with a position as playwright for the Imer company in the S. Samuele theatre, owned by the Grimani family. The position taken by Chiari had been until recently held by Goldoni, who had left the year before to work in the S. Angelo theatre, owned by the nobleman Vendramin, with the company managed by Girolamo Medebach.⁴

The meeting with Michele Grimani is recalled by Chiari in the fourth volume of his *Trattenimenti dello spirito umano* (1780), where he describes his client as the 'rispettabile Protettore' of one of the theatres of the city.⁵ Chiari explains that the great success of the new comedies written by Goldoni was causing great losses to other competitors still working with improvising actors. Grimani thus hired the abbot with the purpose of writing comedies 'in the style' of Goldoni, hoping to meet the public's changed expectations. The reason behind this choice could also have been the recent success of the *Lettere scelte*, in which Chiari had shown he was perfectly able to handle a genre *à la mode* and make it a success.

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- 3 The first scholars to recognize the existence of this cultural network and its importance to the understanding of the genres involved were those of the first half of the twentieth century, such as Sommi Picenardi, Aldo Ravà, and of course Marchesi. Aldo Ravà, 'Giacomo Casanova e l'abate Chiari', *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, 21 (1911), 183–98; Marchesi, *Studi e ricerche*; Gianfrancesco Sommi-Picenardi, *Un rivale del Goldoni* (Milan: Mondaini, 1902). More recently, scholarship has focused on and interpreted in particular the relationship between theatre and the novel in Venice, often stressing the fundamental role of the public, and novels. Among the others, see Ann Hallamore Caesar, 'Theatre and the Rise of the Italian Novel: Venice 1753–84', *Italian Studies*, 67 (2012), 37–55; Tavazzi, *Il romanzo in gara*; Laura Riccò, *Parrebbe un romanzo. Polemiche editoriali e linguaggi teatrali ai tempi di Goldoni, Chiari, Gozzi* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2000);
 - 4 Chapter VII of Giuseppe Ortolani's *Settecento*, pp. 417–512, although unfortunately incomplete, is still a valuable source of information about the abbot's theatrical production of that period, and beyond. See also *Pietro Chiari e il teatro europeo del Settecento*, ed. by Alberti; Marco Catucci, *Il teatro esotico dell'abate Chiari: il mondo in scena tra "décor" e ragione* (Rome: Robin, 2007). From the perspective of Goldoni, see also Ginette Herry, *Carlo Goldoni. Biografia ragionata*, 3 vols (Venice: Marsilio, 2007–9), in particular II: 1744–1750 and III: 1750–1753.
 - 5 Pietro Chiari, *Trattenimenti dello spirito umano sopra le cose del mondo passate, presenti e possibili ad avvenire, del signor abbate Pietro Chiari*, 12 vols (Brescia: Berledeis, 1780–81), IV (1780), 86.

The meeting probably happened in 1748: Chiari writes in the *Trattenimenti* that he had bought time before accepting the job, postponing his debut to the 1749 Carnival season.⁶ It is possible that they had been introduced by Pasinelli himself: in 1748 he had published a *libretto* – the musical drama *Evergete* – performed in the ‘famosissimo teatro Grimani di S. Gio. Grisostomo’.⁷ Evidence of the good relationship between Michele Grimani, Pasinelli and Chiari can also be found in the third volume of the *Lettere scelte* published in 1752. In the dedicatory note to Michele Grimani, Pasinelli thanks the nobleman for protecting both him and Chiari.⁸ We might hypothesize that the bookseller had contributed actively to promoting the abbot among the ‘primi della città’ who frequented his shop in those years.

The relationship proved fruitful for all of them. Grimani had finally found a strong competitor of Goldoni, someone able to make a success of his theatres. Chiari was finally heading towards a successful literary career, making his mark in Venice and (probably) at that point living by his pen. Pasinelli traded on the success of Chiari as a playwright by holding quasi-exclusive rights over the publication of his works, while sporadically publishing books and works related to other performances held in the Grimani theatres.⁹

6 ‘Progettato mi fu indi a non molto per l’anno seguente di scrivere per un teatro già precipitato dall’emulazione delle Commedie Goldoniane all’ultima moda. Altro impegno non accettai dopo qualche riflesso, che di farne una pruova per il carnevale venturo’, Chiari, *Trattenimenti*, IV, 86–87.

7 Francesco Silvani and Domenico Lalli, *Evergete, dramma per musica da rappresentarsi nel famosissimo Teatro Grimani di S. Gio. Grisostomo l’autunno dell’anno 1748* (Venice: Pasinelli, 1748).

8 ‘I titoli gloriosi d’umilissima servitù, pe’ quali l’Autore di questo Libro dal’E.V: dipende, e da tutta la sua Eccellentissima Casa: quelli, per i quali da lei dipendo io medesimo, uniti alla inclinazione divota dell’uno e dell’altro, non mi lasciavano arbitrio per deliberar della scelta. Proteggendo ella queste Lettere a lei dedicate, viene in miglior maniera a proteggere chi a lei le dedica e chi le scrisse. Dandole l’uno e l’altro di noi questo contrassegno innegabile del nostro rispetto, veniamo a meritarcì amendue in miglior maniera la protezione sua, e il suo gradimento’, Pietro Chiari, *Lettere scelte*, III, pp. [i–iii].

9 Such as in the case of Pietro Metastasio, *Attilio Regolo. Dramma del sig. abbate Pietro Metastasio poeta cesareo da rappresentarsi nel Teatro di S. Samuele* (Venice: Pasinelli, 1750). The opera had been presented in Dresden at the beginning of the year and was performed the last night of the carnival by the company of the S. Samuele theatre. See Eleanor Selfridge-Field, *A New Chronology of Venetian Opera and Related Genres, 1660-1760* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 620.

Along with the increasing success of other genres of *letteratura amena*, the first years of competition between Goldoni and Chiari were extremely important for the publishing market for comedies, and the two authors actively contributed to its development. There were two main forms in which plays were published: on the one hand, they were published individually, and if possible at the time of the performance in order to get the best publicity from it; on the other hand, they were collected in edited anthologies published later.

Individual publishing was not a complete novelty, as opera librettos and tragedies were already present in the catalogues of Venetian booksellers. However, this form of publishing comedies first appears with the controversy between Goldoni and Chiari. One of the causes is of course that with the ‘riforma’ of the two playwrights, comedies began to be written in their entirety, where they had previously been limited to a *canovaccio* which left a large part of the action up to improvisation. Scholars have also argued for a more practical reason related to the dispute: Goldoni had decided to publish the text of *La Vedova scaltra* as evidence of Chiari’s plagiarism in *La scuola delle vedove*.¹⁰

Studies have also attributed to Goldoni the practice of anthologising comedies.¹¹ At this time the two playwrights opened a new front of confrontation through anthologies in particular. In 1750 Goldoni began an edition of his plays with Giuseppe Bettinelli; Chiari followed with a Pasinelli edition in 1752. Their publishing choices were also influenced by their careers: as they moved from one theatre to the other and changed companies, they also changed their approach to publishing their work.

10 Marzia Pieri, ‘Problemi e metodi di editoria teatrale’, in *Storia del teatro moderno e contemporaneo* ed. by Roberto Alonge and Guido Davico Bonino, 3 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 2000–3), II (2000), 1073–1101 (p. 1080). On the episode of *Scuola delle vedove* and *Vedova allegra* see also Ortolani, *Settecento*, pp. 430–33 and Herry, *Carlo Goldoni*, II, pp. 249–62.

11 See Ivo Mattozzi, ‘Carlo Goldoni e la professione di scrittore’, *Studi e problemi di critica testuale*, 4 (1972), 95–153; Infelise, *L’editoria veneziana*, pp. 196–98; Anna Scannapieco, ‘Giuseppe Bettinelli editore di Goldoni’, in *Problemi di critica goldoniana*, 3 (1994), 63–188.

During his career, Chiari anthologized his works into several collections published by two different entrepreneurs. In the early years of his career as a playwright for Grimani the plays were collected by Pasinelli in the *Commedie rappresentate ne' teatri Grimani di Venezia*, published between 1752 and 1753; all the plays included are written in prose.¹² The second anthology was instead published by Giuseppe Bettinelli in 1756, with the title *Commedie in versi*.¹³ This change needs to be further examined, as Bettinelli's edition is a typical example of how the choices and positions of authors were mirrored by the publishing market.

At the end of 1752, Chiari had once again changed the company he was working with, replacing Goldoni this time as a playwright for the company led by Girolamo Medebach in the S. Angelo theatre. Once again, this was prompted by Goldoni moving again, in this case to the San Luca theatre, held by the Vendramin family. The years 1753-1755 were further characterized by a worsening of the controversy between the two authors.

The publishing history of that period clearly reflects these movements. In 1753, Goldoni sued Bettinelli to prevent him continuing to publish his comedies; and soon started to publish a new (successful) edition with the publisher Paperini in Florence. Girolamo Medebach also got involved in the dispute: as manager of the company Goldoni had been writing for, he claimed to have rights over the comedies and their publication.¹⁴ In 1756, the authorities finally decided that Goldoni had to compensate Bettinelli for the losses caused by the Florentine edition, complying with the

12 In 1752 both Chiari and Goldoni began writing their comedies using the *martelliano* verse, so that comedies written in prose were rarely found in later anthologies.

13 On Bettinelli see Alfredo Cioni, 'Bettinelli, Giuseppe' in *DBI*, 9 (1967), <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-bettinelli_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-bettinelli_(Dizionario_Biografico)/>) [accessed 17 December 2014].

14 The *Riformatori* asked Bettinelli and Goldoni to also choose two representatives who had to find an agreement on their behalf: among others, Bettinelli had nominated his colleague Angelo Pasinelli. See Mattioli and Scannapieco on this aspect. See also Teresa Megale, 'Medebach, Girolamo' in *DBI*, 43 (2009) <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/girolamo-medebach_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/girolamo-medebach_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) [accessed 13 December 2014]; Giovanni Bartoli, *Notizie storiche de' comici italiani*, ed. by Giovanna Sparacello (IRPMF, 2010) [online] <http://www.irpmf.cnrs.fr/IMG/pdf/Bartoli_notizie.pdf> [accessed 5 July 2013].

customary approach of the Serenissima that favoured entrepreneurs against authors, and Venetian against foreign competitors.¹⁵

In this sense the publication of Chiari's *Commedie in versi* by Bettinelli in 1756 (rather than by his business partner Pasinelli) is explained by a perspective which saw the rights over the work of a playwright as equally held by the company and the theatre it was written for, rather than being the sole property of the author;¹⁶ a similar approach was also to be found in the publishing market, where rights were usually held by bookseller and printers, rather than authors (although Goldoni in those years was specifically – and unsuccessfully – contesting this perspective). Therefore, when Chiari began to work with Medebach, he also started publishing his comedies with Giuseppe Bettinelli. Of course, publishing the most famous competitor of Goldoni while the controversy between theatres was reaching its peak, must surely have appeared as a little vindictive.

The controversy between Chiari and Goldoni, however, mostly ran through texts. The public was informed about the debate and its protagonists simply by going to the theatre. From the very beginning, with Chiari's satirical parody *La scuola delle vedove* responding to Goldoni's *La vedova allegra*, texts had presented two levels: one visible which corresponded to the fictional story; and another, invisible to the uninformed, which established a complex system of references to contemporary Venetian life and people, particularly those involved in the controversy.

A contemporary observer, Checo Muazzo, equally critical of Goldoni and Chiari (and their theatrical reforms), describes this system in quite a colourful way:

15 See Riccò, *Parrebbe un romanzo*, pp. 15–21; Mattozzi, 'Carlo Goldoni e la professione'; Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, pp. 196–98; Scannapieco, 'Giuseppe Bettinelli editore'.

16 The last important anthology by Chiari was *Nuova raccolta di commedie in versi dell'abbate Pietro Chiari*, 2 vols (Venice: Pasinelli, 1763–64).

Ma cosa voleu più satirico e insolente delle comedie de Carlo Goldoni e dell'abbate bresciano, prima gesuita e po' disfatto¹⁷, Pietro Chiari?, che stimo assae che qualcedun no i g'abbi rotto gnancora la testa e maccae ben le coste. Zelle altro che tor de mira el terzo, el quarto, sia zentilomeni sia cittadini sia qualunque altro che i conosce e rappresentarli al vivo sulle scene? E massime questo fa, in versi martilliani, el reformatore dei mi cogioni Carlo Goldoni.¹⁸

Unlike other contemporary witnesses, mostly intellectuals and often directly involved in the dispute, Muazzo's perspective is that of a noble *barnabotto* in his twenties during the theatre war, who was beginning a career in the lower ranks of the Republic's administration. However, precisely because he was not directly involved in the dispute, Muazzo's example suggests that during the 1750s a large part of the public – not just the people directly involved, or those in high society circles – was probably aware of the internal references present in plays, although it is difficult to say how large this group would have been.¹⁹

As Ann Hallamore Caesar argues, the attention of the wider public was probably attracted by an increasing interest in the life of actors, as an early form of celebrity gossip.²⁰ The hypothesis that the allusive level could be accessed by many in the city is reinforced by the comments of contemporaries who had direct experience of such attention.²¹ And the preoccupation of the authorities is still another case in point: it would be difficult to believe that censorship became stricter simply because of a literary debate among a few intellectuals and in a few aristocratic circles.

17 Muazzo here refers to the suspension *a divinis* of Chiari in 1754. Here's how Gradenigo recorded the news in the *Notatori*: '4. 9bre 1754. *La Veneziana a Parigi*, Commedia recitata trè sere nel Teatro di S: Angelo viene proibita dall'autorità pubblica. Fù sospeso a divinis l'Autore, cioè il Prete Pietro Chiari, ed il segretario degli esecutori alla Bestemmia [...] dall'impiego', Venice, Museo Correr, *Notatori Gradenigo*, II, 118r.

18 Muazzo, *Raccolta de' proverbii*, p. 251.

19 Valeria G. A. Tavazzi quotes this passage to highlight how the allusiveness of novels suggests a multiple reception of texts. Tavazzi, pp. 206–207.

20 Caesar, 'Theatre and the Rise', p. 39.

21 An example is Antonio Gratarol's self-defence, where the exiled enemy of Gozzi laments the insults and attacks which came from 'every kind of person' in Venice. Pietro Antonio Gratarol, *Narrazione apologetica di Pietro Antonio Gratarol, nobile padovano* (Stockholm: Foug, 1779).

In the early years of the controversy, the book market also witnessed the appearance of new genres: first and foremost, the novel. In the Venetian book market the novel was not an unknown genre: during the sixteenth century, the city had been the most important centre of novel publishing in Italy.²² However, in the first half of the eighteenth century, very few of these novels had been republished (in Venice or elsewhere), with the exception of long- and best-sellers, both Italian ones such as Marini's *Calloandro fedele*,²³ or European such as Cervantes' *Quixote*²⁴ and Fenelon's *Les Aventures de Télémaque*.²⁵

The real innovation, which played a pivotal role in the development of the eighteenth-century original novel in Venice, was the diffusion of contemporary foreign novels in translation. The market for these books had been growing, and translations of French and English authors had been published in the city since the 1720s – such as novels by Lesage and Marivaux, as well as works by Defoe, Swift and Richardson.²⁶ The lists of *licenze di stampa* issued between 1740 and 1750

22 Calabrese, De Blasio, and Menetti, 'L'ascesa del romanzo (XVII-XVIII secolo)', pp. 493–507.

23 Giovanni Ambrosio Marini, *Il Calloandro* (Bracciano: Fei, 1640). A later edition (Rome: Corvi, 1653) added *fedele* to the title.

24 The first eighteenth-century Italian edition of the *Quixote* was published by Antonio Groppo – incidentally the same with whom Pasinelli did his apprenticeship – in 1722, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Dell'ingegnoso cittadino don Chisciotte della Mancia* (Venice: Antonio Groppo, 1722). See also Joan Givanel i Mas, *Catalogo de la Coleccion Cervantina*, 5 vols (Barcelona: Diputación provincial de Barcelona, 1941–64), I (1941), p. 227. On the eighteenth-century fortunes of Cervantes' novel see Franco Fido, 'Viaggi in Italia di Don Chisciotte e Sancio nel Settecento. Farsa, follia, filosofia', *Italies*, [online] 4 (2000), <<http://italies.revues.org/2246>> [accessed: 18 December 2014] (repr. In Franco Fido, *Viaggi in Italia di don Chisciotte e Sancio e altri studi sul Settecento* (Florence: Società editrice fiorentina, 2006), pp. 1–36.

25 The first Italian translation of Fénelon's novel *Les aventures de Télémaque* (1699) was published in Leiden, *Gli avvenimenti di Telemaco figliuolo d'Ulisse* (Leiden: Haaring, 1704); the first Venetian edition followed after two decades: *Le avventure di Telemaco figliuolo d'Ulisse ovvero continuazione del quarto libro della Odissea d'Omero* (Venice: Pavino, 1725). See Gabriel Maugain, *Documenti bibliografici e critici per la storia della fortuna del Fénelon in Italia* (Paris: Champion, 1910), pp. 30–31. For an overview of first translations into Italian, see Paolo Zanotti, 'La penetrazione delle letterature straniere in Italia', in *Atlante della letteratura italiana*, ed. by Luzzatto and Pedullà, II, 492–97.

26 Lesage's works *Le diable boiteux* (1707) and *Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane* (1715 and 1725 2nd edn) were translated into Italian and published in Venice since the 1710s: Alain-René Lesage, *Il diavolo zoppo* (Venice: Recurti, 1713); Alain-René Lesage, *Storia di Gil Blas di Santillano* (Venice: Bortoli, 1728). Swift's *Gulliver's travels* (1726) had been published by Giuseppe Corona, *Viaggi del Capitano Lemuel Gulliver in diversi paesi lontani*, 2 vols (Venice: Corona, 1729); and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) in 1730, *La vita e le avventure di Robinson Crusoe, storia galante...* (Venice: Occhi, 1730). See Zanotti, 'La penetrazione delle letterature';

indicate an increase of *letteratura amena* and novels in the 1740s, a trend that reached its peak at the beginning of the 1750s.

It is also for this reason that, when introducing *La Filosofessa italiana*, Pasinelli refers directly to French and English novels as something with which readers were well acquainted. Moreover, he presents the novel as a translation of a work which had just been published in France: ‘è tanto nuovo, che l’ho ricevuto da Parigi a foglio per foglio, secondo che usciva dal Torchio; e posso dire con tutta franchezza, che in Italia non l’ha ancora veduto nessuno’. Pasinelli also specifies that the novel had been said to be better than any other published up to that time: ‘più istruttivo della *Marianna*, più tenero della *Pamela*, più intrecciato della *Contadina*, più vago, e, dirò così, filosofico del *Filosofo Inglese*, che pur fu ricevuto con tanto compatimento’.²⁷

These titles are particularly interesting, as they had all been published in Venice within the past five years: Marivaux’s *La vie de Marianne* in 1746 (by Giovanni Tevernin); Richardson’s *Pamela* in 1749 (by Tommaso Bettinelli); Prevost’s *Le Philosophe anglois, ou histoire de monsieur Cleveland* in 1751 (by Gian Battista Deregni) and finally Charles de Fieux’s *La Paysanne Parvenue* in 1752 (by Tevernin again).²⁸

The reference to recently published books shows that Pasinelli wanted to address a public which was curious and attentive about literary novelties. The decision to present the *Filosofessa* as a translation, as well as the references to *foreign* novels recently published, are both parts of a marketing strategy aimed at catching the interest of this public. Pasinelli had clearly foreseen the potential for a new market of novels, and was trying to jump on to it with a new product. Having already

Henri Cordier, *Essai bibliographique sur les oeuvres d’Alain-René Lesage* (Paris: Leclerc, 1910); Hermann J. Real, *The Reception of Jonathan Swift in Europe* (New York: Continuum, 2005).

27 ‘Lo stampatore a chi legge’, Pietro Chiari, *La filosofessa italiana* (Venice: Pasinelli, 1753). Reprinted in Daniela Mangione, *Prima di Manzoni*, pp. 162–63 (163).

28 For a bibliography of French translations, see Maria Rosa Zambon, *Bibliographie du roman français en Italie au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Didier, 1962). See also the titles recorded in ASV, *Arti*, 340–341.

experienced the success of the *Lettere*, it was probably reasonable enough for him to try again with another genre.

The success of translated novels was equally important for Chiari, the first author to foresee the potential of capturing the success of novels on the stage: theatrical adaptation of novels in those years was one of Chiari's preferred techniques. This practice paid off for him very soon.²⁹

For example, the abbot adapted Marivaux' *La vie de Marianne* into two different plays, both of them performed in the Teatro S. Samuele during the Carnival season of 1751: the first was entitled *L'orfana, o sia la forza della virtù*; the second *L'orfana ritrovata, o sia la forza del naturale*.³⁰ The two plays were also – as was usual in those times – printed individually, probably at the time of the performance. *L'orfana, o sia la forza della virtù* was published anonymously; while *L'orfana ritrovata* had an indication of the author in the frontispiece.³¹ During the controversy, two of the most successful plays were also adaptations from Richardson's *Pamela* made by Goldoni (*Pamela nubile*) and Chiari (*Pamela maritata*).³²

Comparing the list of published novels with that of comedies gives a hint of the close relationship between the printing press and the theatre in those years.

29 '[Chiari] attinge piuttosto al romanzo straniero contemporaneo, documentando la sensibilità dell'autore alle evoluzioni del costume culturale e delle mode: ne forniscono le prime testimonianze *L'amica rivale* (da *Clarissa Harlowe* di Richardson) e *I nemici del pane che mangiano* (da *Histoire de Gil-Blas de Santillane* di Lesage)', Paolo Bosisio, 'Goldoni e il teatro comico', in *Storia del teatro moderno e contemporaneo* ed. by Alonge and Davico Bonino, II, 137–78 (p. 176). See also Henry, *Carlo Goldoni*, II, 333.

30 The analysis of these two texts and their relation with the war of theatres which was just beginning between Chiari and Goldoni can be found in Giuseppe Ortolani, *Settecento*, pp. 439–42.

31 In both cases the printer was Modesto Fenzo, who in those years specialized in librettos of *drammi per musica*.

32 On the adaptations of *Pamela*, see Ann Hallamore Caesar, 'Richardson's Pamela: Changing Countries, Crossing Genres', *Journal of Romance Studies*, X (2010), 21–35; Ilenia De Bernardis, *L'illuminata imitazione: le origini del romanzo moderno in Italia: dalle traduzioni all'emulazione* (Bari: Palomar, 2007); Tatiana Crivelli, *Pamela o la virtù ricompensata: metamorfosi settecentesche*, in *La lotta con Proteo: metamorfosi del testo e testualità della critica*, ed. by Luigi Ballerini, Gay Bardin and Massimo Ciavolella, 2 vols (Florence: Cadmo, 2000), II, pp. 979–92 (first publ. as 'Pamela, o la metamorfosi ricompensata', *Quaderni d'Italianistica*, 20 (1999), 33–50).

Table 7. Novels and Chiari's and Goldoni theatrical production (1749-1753)				
Year	Author	Title	Source	Year of publication of source in Venice
1749	Chiari	<i>Amica rivale</i>	Richardson, <i>Clarissa Harlowe</i>	? ³³
1750	Goldoni	<i>Pamela nubile</i>	Richardson, <i>Pamela</i>	Tommaso Bettinelli, 1749
1752	Chiari	<i>Buon padre di famiglia</i>	[Goldoni, <i>Padre di famiglia</i>]; Lesage, <i>Gil Blas</i>	Antonio Bortoli, <i>Vita di Gil Blas di Santillano</i> , 1742-46. ³⁴
1752	Chiari	<i>Contadina incivilita dal caso</i>	De Mouhy, <i>Contadina incivilita</i>	Tevernin, 1752
1752	Chiari	<i>Contadina incivilita dal matrimonio</i>		
1752	Chiari	<i>Marianna o sia l'orfana</i>	Marivaux, <i>Vie de Marianne</i>	Tevernin, 1746
1752	Chiari	<i>Marianna o sia l'orfana riconosciuta</i>		
1752	Chiari	<i>Nemici del pane che mangiano</i>	Lesage, <i>Gil Blas</i>	Bortoli, 1742-46.
1752	Chiari	<i>Orfano perseguitato</i>	Fielding, <i>Tom Jones</i> ³⁵	Tevernin, <i>L'orfano fortunato</i> , 1751
1752	Chiari	<i>Orfano ramingo</i>		
1752	Chiari	<i>Orfano riconosciuto</i>		
1753	Chiari	<i>Pamela maritata</i>	Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> ; Goldoni, <i>Pamela nubile</i>	Tommaso Bettinelli, 1749

The chart derives from a list of Chiari's plays presented by Armando Marchi,³⁶ and clearly shows the correlation between them.

33 This first adaptation gives rise to some doubts. There is no trace in the *mandati* of this book, and the first existing translation of Richardson's *Clarissa* recorded in the national OPAC was published in Venice between 1783 and 1789: *Istoria di miss Clarissa Harlowe: Lettere inglesi di Richardson per la prima volta recate in italiano*, 5 vols (Venice: Valvasense, 1783-89). Graf indicates another edition, but published later, in 1806-1807: Arturo Graf, *L'Anglomania e l'influsso inglese in Italia nel secolo XVIII* (Turin: Loescher, 1911), p. 282. See also Tatiana Crivelli, 'Seduzioni romanzesche nell'opera di Goldoni', *Rassegna europea di letteratura italiana*, 17 (2001), 41-59 (53-59).

34 In 1751 a plagiarized edition of *Gil Blas* was published by Neapolitan printer Pellecchia (financed by the bookseller Venaccia), with the false indication of Venice in the frontispiece. Another copy, dated 1750, is listed in a catalogue of the bookseller Giacomo Storti issued in 1787. The catalogue indicates it as 'Edizione Quarta Veneta' [*Alcuni libri che si trovano vendibili presso Giacomo Storti Librajo Veneto* (Venice: Storti, 1787)]. This could be either a reference to Pellecchia's edition, or an indication that Bortoli kept publishing the book even in those years. In fact, a Neapolitan copy very often suggests the commercial success of a book. In 1751 there is also a *mandato* recorded by Bortoli for the publication of the sequel: *Vita di Don Alfonso Blas di Lirias*. However the first copy recorded in the national OPAC for this book (published by Bortoli) is dated 1759.

35 In regard to the translations of *Tom Jones* in Venice, see Hugh Amory, 'Fatum Libelli: "Tom Jones" in Italy', *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 29 (1981), 44-70 and more recently, Luisa Giari, 'Le peripezie delle prime traduzioni italiane del "Tom Jones" tra Francia e Italia', *Problemi di critica goldoniana*, 9 (2002), 229-49, which challenges some of Amory's assumptions and hypotheses.

36 To get a full understanding of these processes it would be useful to compare the actual dates of

The close relation between dates of publication and those of performances suggests that the internal references between the two genres were also made for marketing reasons, following a network of mutual interests between publishers who wanted to seize the success of a play in increasing interest in their novels; and playwrights and managers who capitalized on the success of published stories by adapting them for the stage.

This does not preclude the existence of adaptations without a previous Italian translation of the novel: in Venice a (relatively) large group of readers had a good knowledge of French,³⁷ and above all there were authors and intellectuals like Chiari and Goldoni, who had often also worked as translators.

In some passages of his *Mémoires*, Goldoni resents this passion for novelistic adaptations, and claims that he had been forced by others to write the *Pamela nubile*: ‘Il y avoit quelque tems que le Roman de *Pamela* faisoit les délices des Italiens, et mes amis me tourmentoient pour que j’en fisse une Comédie’.³⁸ However, despite the author’s resistance the play enjoyed great public success: ‘la Comédie de *Pamela* est un drame selon la définition des François; mais le Public la trouva intéressante et amusante, et ce fut de tous mes Ouvrages donnés jusqu’alors, celui qui emporta la palme’.³⁹

performances (when this is possible) such as those collected by Selfridge-Field, *A new chronology*, and the dates of novels’ registration recorded in the *mandati*.

37 On the diffusion of French literature in Venice and its readership: Franco Piva, *Cultura francese e censura a Venezia nel secondo Settecento. Ricerche storico-bibliografiche* (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 1973); Anne Machet, ‘La diffusion du livre français à Venise dans la deuxième moitié du XVIII^e siècle d’après les bibliothèques privées vénitiennes’, *Annales du centre d’enseignement supérieur de Chambéry. Section de Lettres*, VIII (1970), 29–52; Anne Machet, ‘Le marché du livre français en Italie au XVIII^e siècle’, *Revue des études italiennes*, 29 (1984), 193–222; Françoise Waquet, ‘La Lumière... vient de France : le livre français en Italie à la veille de la Révolution’, *Mélanges de l’Ecole française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 102 (1990), 233–59; Stefania Valeri, *Libri nuovi scendon l’Alpi: venti anni di relazioni franco-italiane negli archivi della Società tipografica de Neuchâtel (1769-1789)* (Macerata: EUM, 2006).

38 Carlo Goldoni, *Mémoires de M. Goldoni, pour servir a l’histoire de sa vie, et a celle de son théâtre*, 2 vols (Paris: Duchesne, 1787), II, 63.

39 Goldoni, *Mémoires*, II, 68.

Another of the main effects of adaptations on plays was a renewed public demand for *romanzesco*.⁴⁰ Both Chiari and Goldoni were keen to follow this new fashion. In order to justify the “novelization” of comedies presented in those years, Goldoni explains in a further passage that he did so precisely against the fashion for adapting novels for the stage: he wanted to show that he could make a *romanzesco* play without stealing from an existing novel.

Après la Comédie de Pamela, et sur-tout pendant le succes équivoque de l'*Homme de goût* et la chute du *Joueur*, mes amis vouloient absolument que je donnasse quelqu'autre sujet de Roman afin, disoient-ils, de m'épargner la peine de l'invention. Fatigué de leurs sollicitations, je finis par dire, qu'au lieu de lire un Roman pour en faire une Piece, j'aimerois mieux composer une Piece dont on pourroit faire un Roman.⁴¹

Education matters: eruditi, volgo, and the lettore medio

The success of both adaptations and novels raises several questions about the nature of their publics, and in particular about the relationship between spectators and readers. As Hallamore Caesar⁴² argues, the publics of theatre and novels often tend to be similar; and it is easy to think about readers of novels as a subset of spectators. The theatre public was of course wider and more heterogeneous than that of books: it came from very different backgrounds and different levels of literacy, or even complete illiteracy. As Chiari put it, the audience was a ‘radunanza di persone di temperamento, di sesso e d’inclinazione differentissimi’.⁴³ Moreover, as shown in the previous chapter, not all the people who could afford the ticket for a comedy could equally well pay for three volumes of a translated novel.

40 On this aspect see Crivelli, ‘Seduzioni romanzesche’.

41 Goldoni, *Mémoires*, II, 84.

42 Caesar, ‘Theatre and the Rise of the Italian Novel’, p. 37.

43 Pietro Chiari, *Commedie in versi dell’abate Pietro Chiari bresciano poeta di S.A. serenissima il sig. duca di Modana*, 10 vols (Venice: Bettinelli, 1756–74), I, 10.

Introducing the first volume of the *Commedie in prosa per i teatri Grimani*, Chiari makes a distinction between the public of the theatre and that of books. The author's discourse here centres on the distinction between performed and published plays, rather than between a play and a novel. In Chiari's view, the reception of a play was influenced by many factors:

la viva voce, e l'azione di chi rappresenta le parti serie; la destrezza, il brio, l'acutezza di chi rappresenta le parti ridicole; la decorazione delle Scene, e degli abiti, la disposizione, il silenzio, la benignità degli ascoltatori, sono tutte cose che non ponno esprimersi in carta.

On the other hand, 'per dilettere chi legge nel suo gabinetto, tener bisogna altra strada da quella che si tiene, per dilettere chi siede in un pieno Teatro'. Improbable scenes, and 'azioni più contrarie a' precetti dell'Arte' are appreciated by the public of theatres, but the 'leggitore erudito':

non può a meno, che non l'offendano, quando non abbia la benignità di riflettere, che le Commedie scritte per un Teatro sono di quelle lontananze dipinte in tela, o sulle muraglie, che perdono ogni bellezza, ogni proporzione, ogni merito, se si guardino da vicino, o da un punto di vista che ad esse non si convenga.⁴⁴

To understand the difference between these publics, it is probably useful to see how Chiari saw them when presenting the first volume of the *Commedie in prosa*:

Chi ha cuore d'esporsi sopra un Teatro alle censure, bene spesso indiscrete, del Pubblico, mancar non dovria di coraggio; anzi sembrargli dovrebbe men male, presentandosi colle Stampe agli occhi degli Eruditi, che, più purgati essendo, esser deggiono più ragionevoli.⁴⁵

44 Pietro Chiari, *Commedie rappresentate ne' teatri Grimani di Venezia, cominciando dall'anno 1749. D'Egerindo Criptonide, pastor arcade della Colonia parmense*, 4 vols (Venice: Pasinelli, 1752-1758), I (1752), p. ix.

45 Pietro Chiari, *Commedie rappresentate*, I, p. v.

The reference to the ‘*leggitore erudito*’ suggests that in passing from stage to publishing, the main audience for Chiari had become the public of intellectuals, as if he was trying to secure their attention and acceptance. Chiari addresses this group in particular when dealing with certain genres and forms: publications in verse are more often than not accompanied by references or direct addressees to *eruditi*, while works in prose – namely, *Lettere* and novels – tend to refer to a wider and less identifiable public, and scarcely mention the intellectual élite.

As Valeria Tavazzi argues:

Più corretto [...] sarebbe invece individuare un nesso fra il pubblico romanzesco e quello delle edizioni teatrali, abbastanza vasto da decretare il duraturo successo del libro goldoniano. Per questa via si potrebbe postulare che i due casi per cui nel Settecento è stata utilizzata la categoria commerciale del *best-seller* si rivolgevano in realtà allo stesso mercato o ne condividevano comunque un’ampia fascia comune.⁴⁶

To reinforce Tavazzi’s hypothesis, it has to be said that sometimes Chiari does not seem to distinguish clearly between these two publics. Introducing to the reader his adaptation from Pope’s *Essay on men* written in *martelliano* verse and published by Giuseppe Bettinelli in 1755, *L’uomo*, the addressee seems once again to be the ‘*leggitore erudito*’: ‘[n]on mi sono presa la pena di citare in margine i passi precisi degli Autori suddetti: perocchè i leggitori eruditi d’uopo non hanno della scorta mia per farne il confronto’. In fact the book will offer both entertainment to friends (‘*materia da trattenersi*’), and a good excuse to show off to enemies: ‘porgendo a questi un nuovo argomento, onde far pompa d’erudizione, d’onestà, e di letterario buon gusto nelle loro censure’.⁴⁷

46 Tavazzi, *Il romanzo in gara*, p. 213.

47 Pietro Chiari, *L’uomo: lettere filosofiche in versi martelliani* (Venice: Giuseppe Bettinelli, 1755), p. [x].

Later, however, Chiari clearly addresses a wider public when talking about the form chosen for his translation/adaptation, the *verso martelliano*:

M'è piaciuto di comporre le presenti lettere in versi Martelliani, piuttosto che in altro metro toscano: perché mi parvero essi più adattati all'argomento mio, ed al gusto corrente di questa erudita metropoli. Mancando a lei nella corrente stagione il piacere della Poesia su' Teatri, ho voluto, quanto per me si poteva, che ne la risarcissero i Libri; onde conservare in lei quel Poetico gusto radicato altamente nell'armonia dell'anima nostra [...] Ma di ciò, e d'altre simili cose moltissime m'occorrerà parlare più a lungo nella edizione delle Commedie mie in versi Martelliani di questo istesso tenore, quando le convenienze dell'onestà, e le circostanze del tempo mi permetteranno di pubblicarle.⁴⁸

Once again in this case the addressee is not completely clear: the first sentence includes a reference to the 'gusto corrente', which is a typical expression to be found in *letteratura amena*, but also associates the adjective 'erudita' with Venice. Even more confusing is the second part of the paragraph, where Chiari offers his book as a substitute for the theatrical season, as plays were not allowed outside of Carnival.⁴⁹

The apparent confusion between the *eruditi* and a new, emerging public, therefore, is present from the beginning, and the main arena in which this distinction will be made definitely clear is certainly the novel, once the genre established itself in the market. Until then, the concept of this new public is still difficult to ascertain, both for writers and publishers.

The main reason for this confusion is that this new public locates itself in a hybrid zone between the elite of intellectuals, and the anonymous multitude of

48 Chiari, *L'uomo*, p. [xi]. Chiari never missed a chance to promote his own work to his readers, and to make it spread from one book to the other. Not surprisingly then in this passage, under the pretext of theatre, he promotes the forthcoming *Commedie in versi*, which were going to be published by Bettinelli himself.

49 The passage can also be explained by considering the distinction between verse and poetry mentioned by Chiari, in which verse holds a more dignified position, and therefore may deserve a more aware and learned public than prose. This distinction is partially mirrored, especially in the first years, by the publishing strategies of Chiari. He published *L'uomo* with Bettinelli, who was also the publisher of the *Commedie in versi*. Bettinelli was well known as the publisher not only of Goldoni's comedies, but first and foremost of the poet, Pietro Metastasio.

theatres. Such hybrid status is evident in the semantic choices made by the writer. For instance, in the introduction to the *Commedie in prosa*, speaking of the differences between *eruditi* and the *volgo*, Chiari wrote:

So che il buono, e il bello in materia di lettere è una cosa reale, che non dipende dal caso; So che di questo buono, e di questo bello, non è giudice il volgo; So che la parzialità, e la passione accieca i più illuminati intelletti; e che le persone ragionevoli, intendenti, e discrete, non decidono d'una composizione Poetica con quella franchezza medesima, che si deciderebbe d'una vivanda, dicendo che è buona, o cattiva, senza averla assaggiata; e sentendone soltanto l'odore.⁵⁰

The description of readers as 'persone ragionevoli, intendenti, e discrete', and 'illuminati intelletti', is often found in novels, to indicate the new public. It is therefore possible that in this case, Chiari did not distinguish clearly between *eruditi* and a wider public, different from the *volgo*.

In the 1740s and 1750s, recognizing the identity of this third public between intellectuals and *volgo* became a necessity both for authors and publishers. It was plain that this public existed, as it contributed actively to publishing successes and failures. In fact, one of the problems of identifying this new public, and one of the main causes leading contemporaries to confound the three groups, was precisely that the third public was mainly seen through the new products it was offered, which were different both from erudite books, and from popular literature.

A good example of these new products can be found in *La tartana degli influssi*,⁵¹ a curious publication written by Carlo Gozzi, the third playwright to enter the theatre controversy. The *tartana* is in fact a *lunario*, a lowbrow genre, certainly one of the most diffused ever. However, Gozzi uses it to attack his competitors, clearly addressing a public (surely Venetian) capable of understanding the satirical

⁵⁰ Chiari, *Commedie rappresentate*, I, p. v.

⁵¹ Carlo Gozzi, *La tartana degli influssi: per l'anno bissestile 1756* (Paris [but Venice]: n. pub. [but Colombani], 1757 [but 1756]).

references of the text. Gozzi's attacks were not only aimed at Goldoni and Chiari, but included also their publishers, as in the sonnet 'agli stampatori':

Stampator miei de' libri, che van male,
Io vi mando un Lunario col malanno;
Se volete stamparlo, vostro danno;
S'è l'anno bisestil, dev'esser tale. [...]

Parlo col Bettanino, (a) col Lovisa,
Non già col Bettinello, (b) e Pasinello,
Poiché tant'alto il becco non immollo.

Il dico, il credo, e sollo,
Che l'onor di que' torchi unqua non merito,
Che stampan le riforme del preterito.⁵²

The footnotes (a) and (b) explain that Bettanino and Lovisa are 'stampatori di Lunarij' while Pasinelli and Bettinelli are 'stampatori de' libri maravigliosi moderni',⁵³ and also those who publish 'le riforme del preterito', the books of the two reformers Goldoni and Chiari.

This third public which made the fortunes of Pasinelli and Bettinelli, as well as of other printers and booksellers, is precisely that involved in the publishing market of 'libri maravigliosi moderni'; and the difficulty in identifying it is also linked to the innovative form of these books. The cultural quality of these books was considered too low for the intellectual elite, which from the start defined these works (often on purpose) as lowbrow, popular literature, presenting them as equal to *lunari*. The

⁵² Gozzi, *Tartana*, p. 10.

⁵³ On the *Tartana* see Stefano Calabrese, 'Verticale del 1757', in *Atlante della letteratura italiana*, ed. by Luzzatto and Pedullà, II, 648–53. Along with these two entrepreneurs, Gozzi avoids mentioning (possibly on purpose) the bookseller Pietro Colombani, who was equally if not more active than his colleagues in the publication of 'libri maravigliosi moderni' and at the same time an important publishing partner for Gozzi.

definition by Baretti and others of the readership of novels, is also caused by their negative judgement of these works.

Meanwhile, the main features of *letteratura amena* are very different to those of literature of high diffusion, such as chapbooks, *almanacchi* or *lunari*. The concept of modernity associated with novels and similar works, and the desire for novelty which permeated the genre and its market, clash with the status of literature of high diffusion, mainly based on the repetition of traditional patterns and stories – and characterized by texts with an extremely long life.⁵⁴

The importance of the public of these new genres was however clear to contemporary authors and publishers, also those who were not involved directly in novels. A presentation of an essay on the poetry of Metastasio, published in 1768, indirectly shows the importance of a similar public.

Non pretendo già con queste inezie di cercar luogo nella Repubblica letteraria, o tanto meno di procacciarmi nome con toglier di mira l'Abate Metastasio, ma bensì unicamente di trattenermi con l'amabile stuolo delle persone galanti: quelle in specie che amano d'imparare senza fatica, e divertendosi. Nè per altro motivo incomincio da una specie di commenti sopra un celebratissimo Scrittore se non per muovere con innocente artificio l'universale curiosità, nel tempo medesimo che cerco d'unire sotto un sol punto di vista i vari pensieri, e le serio-giocose memorie, che desidero valevoli a discacciare la malinconia, ed erudire a poco a poco quanto basta per brillare al Teatro, al Caffè, o nelle colte gioviali conversazioni. Egli è ben vero che preso a battere tale opportuna strada m'è quindi nata, e nascerà sempre occasione d'entrare in alcuni punti massicj e dalla frivola galanteria ben lontani. [...] ⁵⁵

54 For an overview of this genre and its market, see at least Carnelos, *I libri da risma* and by the same, *Con libri alla mano*. On the relationship between literature and oral tradition, and the diffusion and popularization of literary works in Italy in the early modern period, see Marina Roggero, *Le carte piene di sogni: testi e lettori in età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006).

55 Siro Severino Capsoni, *Memorie galanti centuria prima di pensieri, ed annotazioni sopra le opere dell'Abate Metastasio* (Venice: Radici, 1768). For the attribution of this work to Capsoni, and for more about the author see Pietro Cabrini, 'Capsoni, Siro Severino', in *DBI*, 19 (1976), <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/siro-severino-capsoni_%28Dizionario_Biografico%29/> [accessed 26 November 2014].

The recurring elements used to describe *letteratura amena* are all present. From the opening sentence, the author separates his work from those for the *Repubblica letteraria* of intellectuals; then he addresses directly his readers, ‘persone galanti’ who like to learn while getting entertained. The sentence ‘imparare divertendosi, e con poca fatica’ is indeed a catchphrase present almost in every novel and work of *letteratura amena*. The author explains to readers that the book will inform them with enough information (which he calls erudition) that may help to give a good account of themselves in public: ‘in Teatro, al Caffè, o nelle colte gioviali conversazioni’. Capsoni was not alone in using such strategies. Similar catchphrases were repeated over and over again by writers and publishers who wished to grab the attention of the new public. Sometimes the same words were also used for publications that did not belong to *letteratura amena*. A good example is the *avviso* to the reader written by Francesco Ranieri Chiari in *Studio di lettere raccolte da buoni autori antichi e moderni*.⁵⁶ The book does not belong to *letteratura amena*. It is a school book made, as the title says, ‘ad uso degli studenti bramosi di esercitarsi nello scriver bene’. Still, after praising the usefulness of this work, the author claims: ‘Se poi curate troppo dell’utile perche forse non ne avete di bisogno, vi troverete del dilettevole ne’ racconti di bei viaggi o sian per terra, o per mare, oppur di fatti degni di esser saputi.’ Readers may also have fun finding ‘dell’allegro nelle lettere giocose’. Ranieri Chiari closes with the hope to meet the expectation of as many readers as possible,⁵⁷ similarly to Pasinelli in the introduction to Costantini’s *Lettere*. In this sense, it is clear that the author is trying his best to capture the attention of the emerging public of *letteratura amena*. Understanding the identity, composition, desires and needs of this public was a difficult but necessary task for publishers and authors.

56 Francesco Ranieri Chiari, *Studio di lettere raccolte da buoni autori antichi, e moderni* (Venice: Recurti, 1744).

57 ‘Alla perfine io spero grandemente, che ciascun genio sia per ritrovarsi pascolo confacente a’ suoi appetiti’, Ranieri Chiari, *Studio di lettere*, p. ix.

As Daniela Mangione points out, the task of identifying the readership and establishing a relationship with them was particularly difficult for the novel, resulting in ‘diversi, più o meno impacciati tentativi di posizionamento degli autori [...] rispetto a opera e pubblico’.⁵⁸ Mangione in particular identifies the difficulty of recognising and accepting the existence of the ‘lettore medio’; a type of reader not contemplated in the traditional division of readers between ‘lettore alto’ and ‘lettore basso’.⁵⁹ The difference between the latter two is on the trust given to textual interpretation: to the former ‘pertiene l’esercizio o del rifiuto o dell’ironia, unico modo per aggirare l’istanza di una fiducia nell’invenzione moralmente disapprovata’; to the *lettore basso* instead ‘pertiene l’esercizio di una pericolosa, acritica fiducia nei confronti della narrazione’.⁶⁰

The problem of recognising the ‘lettore medio’ was clearly a challenge for novelists, and their publishers. Several forces refused to admit its existence, or to give it any credit. First, the intellectual élite, which for the most part did not accept its existence, seeing and presenting the public of novels and *letteratura amena* as equal to the *volgo*. As Madrignani and other scholars pointed out, this was also a result of the great gap that existed between the intellectual élite and the wider public.⁶¹ Moreover, other conservative forces, and in particular the Church, had always been sceptical about the increase in the number of readers (for instance among the lower classes), and the freedom that literacy gave to individuals. As Patrizia Delpiano argues,⁶² the freedom of interpretation given to readers by the new genres challenged the traditional position of control of the ‘written word’ held by the Church. In this

58 Mangione, *Prima di Manzoni*, p. 116.

59 Or, as Madrignani had already pointed out: ‘La comparsa del romanzo induce un fenomeno di grande portata nei tempi lunghi, e cioè la contrapposizione fra opere frequentate dal grande pubblico scarsamente acculturato e quelle solidali con i dettami della tradizione e garantite dagli organi della cultura ufficiale’, Madrignani, *All’origine del romanzo*, p. 4.

60 Mangione, *Prima di Manzoni*, p. 122.

61 Madrignani, *All’origine del romanzo*, pp. 5–6.

62 Delpiano, ‘Sulla riscoperta del romanzo’. Of the same author see also ‘La Chiesa e la lettura’, and *Il governo della lettura*.

sense, as has often been pointed out, it is not by chance that the novel emerges in Venice, where resistance against the control of the Church had always permeated political discourse.⁶³

The distance between traditional readers, and those of *letteratura amena* was a matter of fact. Nonetheless, especially in the first two decades of diffusion of the novel, authors – and Chiari in particular – still attempted to raise the new genre, maybe hoping to fill in the existing gap which divided intellectuals from the rest of readers. One interesting example of this attempt can be found in Chiari's play *Il Filosofo veneziano*, which appeared at the end of 1753, a few months after the publication of *La filosofessa italiana*.⁶⁴

The comedy was performed for the first time on 11 February 1753, during the Carnival.⁶⁵ Unfortunately the original play (written in prose) did not survive, but Chiari wrote a new version in verse to be included in the fourth volume of the *Commedie in versi* (1757). We know from the introduction to this volume that the comedy met with great public success, being performed 'per 18 sere consecutive'.⁶⁶ The comedy was written in response to Goldoni's *il Filosofo inglese*,⁶⁷ and contains many references – clearly understood by the public – to the theatre war up to that point, in defence of the abbot.

L'apologia che in essa introdussi d'altre mie antecedenti Commedie era adattata alle circostanze d'allora; e fu quel colpo inaspettato che sorprese

63 On Venice and its political struggles with the Church, see Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, 5 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1969–1990), II: *La Chiesa e la Repubblica dentro i loro limiti, 1758-1774* (1976) and V: *L'Italia dei lumi, 2. La Repubblica di Venezia, 1761-1797* (1990).

64 See Ortolani, *Settecento*, pp. 480–83.

65 '11 Feb 1753 MV: Nel teatro S. Angelo andò in scena una nuova Comedia, intitolata *il Filosofo veneziano*, di cui ne fù autore l'Abbate Pietro Chiari Bresciano fù Gesuita (?)', Venice, Museo Correr, *Notatori Gradenigo*, 87v. See also Selfridge-Field, *A New Chronology*, p. 559, who quotes the same passage from the *Notatori*.

66 Pietro Chiari, *Commedie in versi dell'abate Pietro Chiari bresciano poeta di S.A. serenissima il sig. duca di Modana*, 10 vols (Venice: Bettinelli, 1756–1774), IV, p. [vi].

67 About the relationship between the two comedies see in particular the introduction to Carlo Goldoni, *Il filosofo inglese*, ed. by Paola Roman (Venice: Marsilio, 2000). Goldoni dedicated the *Filosofo* to the English merchant Joseph Smith.

l'udienza, e la trasse quasi fuori di sè per il piacere incredibile di sentir ricopiate sulle scene quelle dicerie, quelle accuse, e quelle difese che facevano l'argomento ordinario delle conversazioni private, e delle pubbliche più solenni "adunanze". Io mi difesi da mille imposture, che sentivo tuttodi suonarmi all'orecchio; ma lo feci in maniera che non osarono chiamarmi temerario o incivile neppur quelli istessi, che mi volevan ad ogni modo colpevole.

The protagonist, Giovanni Bisognosi, is a young Venetian who has fled his father to avoid an arranged wedding with a woman he does not know. He is now in Amsterdam, living under the false name of Zanetto, and falls in love with a young woman called Marianna. Giovanni/Zanetto calls himself a philosopher, a man who loves and uses reason. Zanetto is also a playwright, and the audience learn that his comedies have recently been published in one volume. A further discussion about these plays in the fourth act completes the autobiographical references and allows Chiari to build up a defence against the 'mille imposture' used to attack him in previous years.⁶⁸ Clearly Zanetto works as an *alter ego* for Chiari, and not surprisingly the audience soon discovers that, like the author, Zanetto is also a novelist. The first person to talk about the novel is the bookseller Gionata, who announces its imminent publication in the second act: 'ho certo suo Romanzo, che avrà del gradimento | Se risolvo stamparlo'.⁶⁹

In this sense, thus, the *Filosofo veneziano* had multiple functions. Firstly, as mentioned above, it was used as a self-defence within the theatrical controversy; secondly, it defends the novel and its dignity as a literary genre. From this defence emerges an evident clash between two forms of literary consumption, one more traditional and the other typical of the new genres and of the new public. Finally, the play was used to advertise Chiari's recently published or forthcoming novels. Internal

68 The main defence is in II.12 when Zerlino and the Barone Dosbech discuss 'Il Moliere ammogliato, la Pamela maritata e la Schiava Chinese'.

69 *Il filosofo veneziano*, II. 5.

references, and its chronological proximity (just one year after the publication of *La Filosofessa italiana* and months before the publication of Chiari's second novel, *La ballerina onorata*, published in the spring of 1754),⁷⁰ strengthen this hypothesis.

The defence of the novel is made by Zanetto, who discusses an issue which had been faced by Chiari and Pasinelli since the publication of the *Filosofessa*: getting the novel accepted by the public, and within the literary system. Rather than merely a theoretical question, the task undertaken by Chiari was also related to the commercial positioning of the genre, influencing the attitude of part of the public (especially that more used to 'traditional' genres).

This attempt has to be considered with others made in the same period to establish a relationship with the new public, whose identity and (more importantly) extension, at that point remained uncertain. In the *Filosofo*, Chiari seems interested in convincing the existing public of traditional genres to appreciate novels.

The three characters involved in this attempt are the novelist, the bookseller, and the (fairly) traditional reader Barone Dosbech. The discussion about the novel starts in a scene with Zanetto and Gionata who are discussing money – as often happens between authors and publishers. Zanetto asks to be paid 'cento fiorini' for the manuscript, while Gionata brings down the price, saying that the book is worth one 'fiorino al foglio' at its most,

Gion. Cossa è alla fine il tuo? Un misero Romanzo
Da conciliare il sonno, da legger dopo il pranzo:
Dicono tutti quelli, che non ne han mai stampati,
Che i Romanzi e le favole non fanno i Letterati.
Zan. No i sa quel che i se diga; e no i lo pol saver,
Se i soli frontispizj i studia dal Librer.
El Romanzo l'è tanto antigo quanto la Poesia.
Xè un Romanzier Esiodo, xè un Romanzier Omero,

70 The *mandato* for this novel was recorded on 15 May 1754 (rev. Angelo Calogerà), see ASV, *Arti*, 340.

Ovidio col Boiardo, e coll'Ariosto intiero.
 Benchè i sia scritti in verso, i va su sto sistema,
 né i Critici vol darghe el nome de Poema.
 Xè un Romanzo el Telemaco, che respettar bisogna,
 Perchè a mille altri libri sempre el farà vergogna.
 De far un bon Romanzo chi xè arrivà alla meta
 Xè Istorico e Filosofo; xè Critico e Poeta.⁷¹

Incidentally, Gionata reports a judgment made by somebody else ('Dicono tutti quelli che'), rather than his own opinion: and in fact this idea is commonly found amongst *eruditi*, the best customers of entrepreneurs who never print novels.⁷² Zanetto answers by praising the novel as a manifold genre ('Istorico e Filososo, [xè] Critico e Poeta') and describing its honourable ancestry.

It is difficult to say if Gionata's portrait corresponds to a real Venetian bookseller, and the evidence is too scarce to decide this. It is clear though that the figure of an extremely pragmatic bookseller can be easily associated with that of Pasinelli and other Venetian booksellers and printers involved in the diffusion of *letteratura amena*. Gionata's catalogue offers initial evidence: along with Zanetto's comedies, he offers works by Voltaire, Newton, Locke and Brunetto to the bibliophile and compulsive collector Barone Dosbech.⁷³ The skirmish between the Baron and Gionata involves books, their price, and even their size, and shows two different

⁷¹ *Il filosofo veneziano*, IV.5.

⁷² In fact, Gionata seems always to report the opinion of other people, rather than having any of his own. Even in other scenes, the bookseller shows first and foremost his pragmatism, extremely attentive to business, rather than to literary debates (as any bookseller should be). Not surprisingly the scene with Zanetto about the novel ends up with Gionata's comment about the price, and his recognition of Zanetto's intellectual qualities: 'Costui pensa da saggio; da saggio egli ragiona | ma il libro suo migliore sarà se me lo dona', IV.12.

⁷³ At that time, these authors were present in many different booksellers' catalogues in Venice: i.e. Giovanni Manfrè and Giovanni Tevernin printed Newton's works respectively in 1749 and 1757; Locke was known through French translations; Voltaire until the late 1760s was mainly known through originals. For the diffusion in Venice of French *philosophes* see Piva, *Cultura francese e censura*; Piva, 'Censura e libri proibiti a Venezia: il "registro Donadoni-Morelli" (1769–1795)', *Aevum*, 48 (1974), 546–69; Anne Machet, 'Le marché italien', in *Histoire de l'édition française. Le livre triomphant: 1660-1830*, ed. by Henri-Jean Martin and Roger Chartier (Paris: Fayard, 1990), pp. 362–69. The reference to Brunetto is more difficult to contextualize with the others.

approaches to reading. In another scene, Gionata laments that Dosbech is attracted only by the size of books:

Della grandezza i libri chi misurò giammai?
Ei vuol che un libro picciolo costar non possa assai.
Ne avrà piene tre stanze; ma non ne legge alcuno:
Purché sian tomi in foglio, sono per lui tuttuno.⁷⁴

Dosbech's character⁷⁵ is ironically described as a bad customer for the bookseller, and a reader who cares more about the size of a book, than its content. The figure of Dosbech is particularly interesting. Rather than an intellectual, or a professional *letterato*, his role is closer to that of a collector of books (we are informed that he does not even read them, although he will after his retirement). In this sense, his habits recall a market of precious, expensive editions, whose high price was justified not only by the content, but by the materiality of the book itself: 'purché sian tomi in foglio'. On the other hand, the list of books offered by Gionata is anything other than conservative. Newton, Voltaire or Locke – with the exception of Brunetto (Latini?) – were to be found in the hands of people interested in reformist and enlightened ideas, feared and despised by conservative and traditionalist forces.

Zanetto (and, in his interested way, Gionata) defends instead the 'libri moderni maravigliosi', which are not to be judged with the works of erudition or philosophy, but have nonetheless a dignity of their own. In this sense, they also represent the new market of the city, where large editions had begun to disappear, and entrepreneurs like Pasinelli focused more and more on the new genres.

74 *Il filosofo veneziano*, I.4. Dosbech himself will explain later why he collects books without reading them: 'Non mi lascian costoro | Leggere un libro, e in libri anch'io spendo un tesoro | Stian questi ancor cogli altri: In essi io m'apparecchio | Il mio trattenimento quando sarò più vecchio', II.5.

75 Ortolani describes this character as 'la caricatura d'uno stravagante, a somiglianza d'altri tipi goldoniani', Ortolani, *Settecento*, pp. 480–81.

The critique against traditional readers (and Dosbech) remains a benevolent one, without a definitive condemnation. Zanetto's defence of the novel in this sense seems to specifically address readers like Dosbech, trying to convince them that the new genres had as much importance and dignity as the old ones.

The point of contention remains the non-specialization of new readers. Intellectuals had been trained to interpret texts 'correctly' by following a long formal education. The path was the same for secular people or clergymen. This close relationship is not surprising, considering that during the eighteenth century the educational system was managed and controlled by religious orders.⁷⁶ The education received created a sort of aristocracy of 'liberi lettori',⁷⁷ which under particular conditions could even be granted access to forbidden texts.⁷⁸ However it was also clear to both novelists and their enemies that readers of novels and *letteratura amena* did not receive an erudite education. Despite being 'partially' cultured, the 'lettore medio' could not be defined as an intellectual as it was traditionally meant to be. Chiari described this kind of education in a long article in the *Gazzetta Veneta*, published the 2 December 1761.⁷⁹

The article has the form of a letter, a reply to a father who is worried about the future of his son. He would like him to have some culture: 'senza farlo un Dottore, farlo vorrei persona di qualche merito'. The article is extremely interesting because it makes clear the form and meaning of the 'alternative form' of education promoted in novels, which has also several similarities with the readers of these books. Chiari

76 This happened everywhere, including Venice, and in particular for the education of elites.

77 Delpiano, 'La chiesa e la lettura', 448, quoting a definition by Rotondò, Antonio, 'La censura ecclesiastica e la cultura', in *Storia d'Italia* ed. by Ruggero Romano and Corrado Vivanti (Turin: Einaudi, 1972–2011), v: *I documenti*, ed. by Lellia Cracco Ruggini and Giorgio Cracco, 2 vols (1973), II, 1415.

78 From this perspective, it is not surprising that all three social groups usually referred to as the novels' audience, are women, the *volgo*, and the young. Three groups paternalistically considered morally and psychologically weak. Women and the *volgo* were also excluded from formal education; while the 'gioventù' is still in the moment of choice, or endures formal education as an imposition.

79 *Gazzetta veneta*, n. 85, 2 December 1761.

begins arguing that education should be tailored to each individual, 'Essendo diversi i talenti delle persone studiose, diversa l'indole, la condizione, e l'età'. But this also means that, unlike with traditional educational methods, 'un solo per tutti medesimo metodo d'insegnare, od una scienza sola ad essi insegnata non può metterli in istato di farne profitto'. Another argument which challenges the traditional educative system is that against Latin language. It should not be studied when pupils are very young: 'le prime applicazioni d'un fanciullo di fresca età debbano essere le più noiose, e difficili, quali son quelle della latina grammatica'. Latin is useful for those who want to 'fare una seria professione di lettere', but any other 'persona bennata' may not need it. Even though Latin is 'uno de' migliori ornamenti della sua educazione, ed è talvolta un gran capitale per distinguersi in ogni adunanza', nonetheless 'non s'ha da perdere in esse tutta la vita'. Instead of spending one's entire youth studying Latin grammar, 'il tempo de' studj loro distribuir si potrebbe con più economia, e con loro minor noja, e con maggiore loro profitto'.

Finally, Chiari recommends an alternative to the study of Latin. It would be better to begin with the Italian language, which is 'a noi naturale', and has to be studied before other foreign languages. Any other topic covered by education, 'scegliere dovete per lui, che non solo adattate siano alla capacità sua; ma in oltre proporzionate alla sua condizione'. The reason is simple: 'Ad un Cavagliero per modo d'esempio, non è necessaria l'eloquenza di Demostene, o la filosofia di Platone. Le scienze più amene della Geografia, della Poesia, della Storia, arricchirlo ponno di cognizioni al suo stato giovevoli, e non costargli molta fatica'.

As for the methodology, the most important thing is to keep the pupil's interest alive: 'istruirlo per non alienarlo dallo studio, in vece di farlo invaghire delle studiose sue applicazioni'. Brutality and authoritarianism should be banned, and replaced by

prizes and praises.⁸⁰ Finally, the last precept given by Chiari, not surprisingly, concerns reading: ‘per allettarlo a leggere, ed imparare leggendo, non gli lasciate per mano se non que’ soli libri, che siano, e di allettarlo, e d’istruirlo capaci’.

The model of education expressed in the article of the *Gazzetta* has several points in common with the model of the reader of *letteratura amena* and above all, of novels. Obviously, there is the idea of learning through entertainment, the *utile dulci*, which as we have seen is the pillar of *letteratura amena*. But above all, it is the idea of an education based on individual talents rather than structured along a traditional path which is particularly interesting. This breaks up the idea of readership into individual readers, multiplying the number of possible interpretations, one for each reader. It is the opposite of the controlled reading of those who had ‘mestiere di lettere’, the intellectual élite.

But this can also be the cause of the phenomenon observed by Mangione for whom novelists were somehow confused about their addressees, because in contrast to other publics, it was more difficult to recognise them: ‘*lettori*, più che lettore singolo, e *pubblico*’.⁸¹ The ‘pulverized’ readership of ‘*lettori medi*’ with a multitude of possible interpretations, was therefore impossible to reduce to a single, recognisable identity.

The multiplicity however does not mean a complete anonymity. Authors and publishers are aware that these reader-learners have a particular position in society, they do not belong to the undistinguishable mass. The references in Chiari’s text clearly point, once again, to the élites, as they were the only ones who could afford to receive an education from ‘*privati precettori*’.

But despite their social position, the alternative way of being educated, and therefore their interpretation of texts, was still considered a risk. This lack of trust is

80 ‘Animarlo fa d’uopo col premio, e colla lode, in vece d’atterrirlo col rigore, o colle minaccie’.

81 Mangione, *Prima di Manzoni*, p. 122.

reflected in the elements which are most feared by intellectuals and moralists. On the one hand, the relationship between pleasure and reading, which is easy to translate into the forbidden realm of eroticism and sexuality. As Delpiano argues, this shift is the result of an historical change: in the second half of the eighteenth century the preoccupation towards these readers moves from a theological perspective, to a moralistic one.⁸² Thus, an increased attention towards the relationship between reading and individual passions.⁸³

On the other hand, the danger sought in novels was that similar books stimulated ‘concupiscenza’ in readers. The term, as Delpiano explains, had two meanings. First, it could refer to sexual habits. Second, in a wider sense, it was what Bossuet had called

[D]ésir insatiable d’expérimenter et de connôître [...] qui [...] fait passer les bornes de la sage sobriété tant commandée par Saint Paul. E in questo desiderio di conoscenza non bisognava eccedere, ‘surtout des livres nouveaux, des romans, des comédies, des poësies’. La voglia di leggere non era altro ‘qu’amusement, et ostentation. Malheureuse curiosité, qui [...] sèche la source des aumones’.⁸⁴

As will be clear in the analysis of novels presented in following chapters, in novels this second aspect prevails over that of teaching dangerous passions. Protagonists’ adventures are often caused by a ‘concupiscenza’ for knowledge and experience. Falling in love is often part of an equation that makes protagonists or other characters disobey and begin their adventures, but at the end, they show that they have learnt to control individual desires, loyal to family and social norms.⁸⁵

82 Delpiano, ‘La chiesa e la lettura’, p. 466.

83 This is what Plebani has analysed in her studies: see Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*.

84 Quoted in Delpiano, ‘La chiesa e la lettura’, p. 467.

85 Clerici recognises this aspect in Chiari’s narratives, saying that the conflict created by individual passions and family requirements is usually won by the latter over the former. However as will be shown in the following chapters, the resolution of conflicts cannot be attributed, as Clerici does, only to ‘l’aspirazione che tutti hanno di instaurare rapporti domestici qualitativamente soddisfacenti’, Clerici, *Il romanzo italiano*, p. 155. The causes of the conflict’s solution lie in the

Novels openly encourage and promote a desire for knowledge and experience, and in this sense, Bossuet's followers had probably good reasons to worry about them. The educational purposes implied in novels and in *letteratura amena* are at the core of this problem. Attacks against these genres and their readers insisted on the risks of learning, while their authors and publishers responded precisely by insisting on the usefulness of these books for the education of readers. The main problem resides in the fact that novels offered an alternative form to traditional education.

Moreover, if traditional education was seen as the only way to form a good reader of texts, legitimating his or her interpretation, novels and other works of *letteratura amena* offered also an alternative way to legitimate their readers' interpretations. This is probably one of the most disruptive, and actually dangerous elements of novels.

As will be shown in the following chapters, this alternative form of education will be carried on through the 'disobedient attitude' of protagonists. This attitude in itself mirrors all the existing fears towards this public and genre. It is an act performed against figures of legitimate secular authority (parents, tutors, and adults); but more importantly, in most cases it is an expression of 'concupiscenza', an uncontrollable thirst for knowledge, and experience. The didacticism of novels in this sense increases danger, by offering examples and stimulating readers' emulation.

The point of contention will be the trust given by each novelist to the interpretive abilities of their readers. For instance, the use of explicit forms of didacticism – such as the use of explanatory passages, and metanarrative interventions – still signals a lower degree of trust in readers. It is typical of Chiari's works, as well as of novelists influenced by him, such as those by Basso

ideology present in novels rather than reflecting a common desire to keep peaceful family relationships.

(*L'avventuriere*) or Piazza's novels in the first decade of his career (such as *L'Omicida irrepreensibile*), which will be analysed in the following chapters.

3. The diseducation of an aristocratic daughter: Chiari's *La Filosofessa italiana*

Se la gioventù vogliosa cotanto di leggere i
casi altrui non imparasse altro che questo da'
miei, anche per ciò solamente non avrò
gettato scrivendo inutilmente il mio tempo.¹

Pietro Chiari's first literary success, *La filosofessa italiana*, is an ideal starting point from which to look at the representation of education and disobedience in Venetian novels. The rebellion of the protagonist is at the centre of the first part of the narrative, while the second presents a model of tormented obedience. Disobedience and submission, however, are part of a wider discourse on education embedded in the novel. The text addresses educative issues both explicitly and implicitly. At the same time, the narrative is presented as an exemplary, educative story. From this perspective, *La filosofessa* is a novel *for* and *about* education.

Furthermore, the ways in which Chiari's text deals with disobedience and education set up a model for future works. A restless, disobedient youth is often at the centre of novels published in this period. The present chapter describes how Chiari developed the theme of disobedience and that of education focusing in particular on the parent-child relationship. It analyses the causes of disobedient behaviour, and how Chiari used it as a powerful narrative device. Finally, it shows how the novel mirrors

¹ Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 2–3.

issues prevailing in Venetian society at that time, in particular those concerning the élite of the city, the primary addressee of the novel.

La filosofessa is one of the most studied among Chiari's novels, and is often referred to as the 'first' Italian novel, although Zaccaria Seriman had published *Viaggi di Enrico Wanton* five years earlier.² *La Filosofessa* had great public success, as is evident from the number of times it was reprinted.³ The novel came out at a particular moment of Chiari's career. Since the end of the 1740s he had become a successful playwright, which also resulted in an escalation of polemics with Carlo Goldoni. A few months before the publication of the novel, the company Chiari was working with in the Teatro San Giovanni Grisostomo suddenly moved to Portugal to work for the Court.⁴ As Valeria Tavazzi has convincingly pointed out, *la Filosofessa* makes several references to this situation, including the satirical portrait of three actors directly involved in the case, Giovanni Vitalba, Giuseppe Imer and the *capocomico* Antonio Sacchi.⁵ This fact indicates a strong relationship with the public

2 Seriman's novel is also based on the adventures of a young protagonist, helped by an elder friend-tutor, a relationship that reminds that between Mentor and Télémaque in Fénelon's novel. *Viaggi di Enrico Wanton alle terre incognite australi, ed al paese delle scimie, ne' quali si spiegano il carattere li costumi, le scienze, e la polizia di quegli straordinari abitanti. Tradotti da un manoscritto inglese*, 2 vols (Venice: Tagier, 1749); 2nd edn, *Viaggi di Enrico Wanton alle terre incognite australi, ed ai regni delle scimie, e de' cinocefali nuouamente tradotti da un manoscritto inglese*, 4 vols (Berne [but Villa di Melma]: [n. pub.], 1764). On the *Enrico Wanton* and its author: Suzanne Kiernan, 'The Exotic and the Normative in *Viaggi di Enrico Wanton alle terre australi incognite* by Zaccaria Seriman', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 26 (2002), 58–77; Donald Maxwell White, *Zaccaria Seriman (1709-1784) and the "Viaggi Di Enrico Wanton": A Contribution to the Study of the Enlightenment in Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961); Marino Parenti, *Un romanzo italiano del Settecento; saggio bibliografico su Zaccaria Seriman* (Florence: Sansoni, 1948); Madrignani, *All'origine del romanzo*, pp. 83–86.

3 The novel was recorded by the bookseller Angelo Pasinelli in the *Mandati* books in the winter of 1752-1753. The first volume was recorded 2 February 1752 (MV); the second and the third less than a month later, on 1 March 1753 (MV). See ASV, *Arti*, 340. The *revisore* in both cases was Giovan Francesco Pivati. It was published anonymously, and presented as a translation from the French. However, in the *avviso* to the third volume, Pasinelli disclosed to readers that the book was in fact an original work written in Italian, and that the author was well known in the city, even though Pasinelli does not explicitly mention his name: 'senza che io lo nomini, egli si fa noto abbastanza per la sua maniera di scrivere, che si conosce infra mille, confrontandola coll'altre Opere sue uscite dalle mie stampe.' Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, p. [iii].

4 Pietro Grandenigo annotated the event: '28 luglio 1753. Comedianti inservienti al Teatro di S. Gio: Grisostomo passano a Lisbona per la corte del Re di Portogallo, mediante il patto di cinque mille duecento zecchini all'Anno'. Venice, Museo Correr, *Notatori Gradenigo*, II, 68v.

5 Tavazzi, *Il romanzo in gara*, pp. 46–59. See also Hallamore Caesar, 'Bagatelle, Bamboccerie, and Bordellerie', p. 40.

of Venice; theatregoers, and everyone who was aware of those events, were able to appreciate the references in Chiari's text. The emergence of the novel as a genre in Venice is closely tied with this stratified reception of texts, which established a close relationship between literary production and the cultural and social life of the city.⁶

La Filosofessa was originally composed of three volumes (or tomes), each of them divided into three sections. Each section is further divided into ten chapters or, as they are then usually known, *articoli*. A fourth volume appeared in 1756, containing a continuation of the previous story. The current analysis however centres on the first three volumes, assuming that the original plan did not include the fourth volume.⁷ While the first three volumes describe the long journey of a young girl who slowly turns into a woman, the fourth volume tells the adventures of the protagonist in her thirties. She is now an adult woman, a widow, who is fleeing from a stubborn lover, and a second marriage. What also kept the fourth volume out of the analysis is the different attention given to the theme of education and self-development, which is as weak and marginal here, as it is central and essential in the previous three. To begin with, the protagonist Madamigella d'Arville lives in a girls' boarding school in Avignon. Although some hints suggest that she belongs to a family of the highest rank, she is unaware of the identity of her parents. The placid life of the pupil is interrupted by three events: she meets and quite immediately falls in love with a

6 As already mentioned in the previous chapter, contemporaries recognised and accepted the stratified reception of these texts. At the same time, the existence of a hidden meaning did not excluded the unaware from appreciating the text. As Checo Muazzo wrote: 'chi lezerà ste frottole o istorielle o fiabbe, come ognuno a so piasimento le giamerà, e che i conoscerà la persona o che no i la conoscerà, se i la conoscerà no ghe riuscirà nonvo anca quello che scrivo zò d'ella. Se non i la conoscerà, i riderà, né la persona averà da importarghene gnente che i rida a spalle soe, mentre zà no la ghe sarà nota a chi leze ste novelle e la ghe servirà a lu come un nome finto e supposto', Muazzo, *Raccolta de' proverbii*, p. 251.

7 Pasinelli's *avviso* in the third volume presents the volume as the 'terzo, ed ultimo' of the series, and the only future publication advertised is that of *La Ballerina onorata*. The only hint which points toward the possibility of a further volume is an allusion made in the last *articolo* of the third volume, when the protagonist agrees that, being still young, she may have other adventures, and assures the reader that in that case she will write them down. 'Se avrò ancora da vivere lungamente, è facile che qualche altra cosa m'accada; ed accadendomi, seguirò a farne memoria, perchè resti dopo la morte mia un esatto ragguaglio della mia vita', Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 236.

young man, the Count of Terme; for the first time in her life, she receives a letter from her mysterious mother; and at the same time, reading by chance another letter addressed to her headmistress, she discovers that her mother is planning to put her in a convent. These last two events trigger her first and most important disobedient act. She runs away from school and has many adventures under the identity of a man, Signor Ricciard.

In the novel, spatial movements correspond to a change of status for the main character. The narrator sums up these changes at the beginning of the fifth section: in a short time she had already been a woman, a man, a merchant, a courtier, a soldier, and finally an ‘uomo di lettere’.⁸ Each of these roles corresponds to a geographical location (woman in the boarding school; cross-dressed as a man to flee from there; merchant during her journey through France and until her arrival in Paris). Ricciard’s political, military and literary careers epitomize those of Venetian young aristocrats coming from families without great fortunes. This is one of the main examples in which the novel mirrors an aristocratic mentality; and more in particular a Venetian one.

In the capital, D’Arville/Ricciard becomes an esquire of the Duchess N.N., where she starts living (and suffering) at Court (courtier). She is then forced by events to leave Paris and move to Italy, where she is appointed an officer in the French Army, and fights in several battles of the Spanish succession war (soldier). In Italy she visits several cities, including Turin, Bologna, Brescia, Verona, Venice, and Rome.⁹

D’Arville then moves back to Paris where she is finally reunited with her parents: she is revealed to be the natural daughter of the Duchess and her lover the

⁸ Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 87.

⁹ The novel makes reference to actual victories and setbacks of the two armies: such events, happening but a few years earlier, should have been easily recognised by readers.

Prince, whose marriage had been forbidden by the Court. From this point on, she returns to her original gender identity, and her movements tend to slow down.

The story of her birth is soon discovered: her mother was forced by the Court to marry the Duke, even though she was sure (and probably assured) of her marriage with the Prince. In the first years of her marriage, while her husband was living in Madrid as ambassador of the French King, she had to hide in Rome for months, secretly giving birth to the protagonist.

After reuniting with her parents, Madamigella D'Arville's origins still remain known only to a few people. The high status of her parents, and the delicate balance of powers within the Court, force them to pretend that she is actually a secret daughter of the Duke, with no blood ties to her natural parents. This however does not stop them from deciding her future, and they decide that she will not marry the Count of Terme.

It is only after several incidents, including the death of the Duke and of other enemies of the protagonist, that they finally succeed in getting married. The new family moves to the Reign of Naples, where she is heiress of land and a mansion. There they live a very private life with the sole company of an abbot; possibly a self portrait of the author himself.¹⁰ The peace is broken by the death of the Count of Terme after a sudden illness, which leaves the protagonist living in the company of

10 Marchesi mentions this possibility: Marchesi, *Studi e ricerche*, p. 60. The most important passage, which may give a hint about Chiari, is when it says the abbot 'aveva servito in corte d'un principe in qualità di suo segretario; ma si era licenziato qualche tempo avanti, perchè credeva di non potervi più stare senza suo decoro', Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 186. Marchesi feebly suggests the Court of Modena, but the passage of the *Filosofessa* and their meeting rather corresponds to the end of Chiari's service under the Cardinal Federico Marcello Lante della Rovere, happened between 1746 and 1747. See Nicola Mangini, 'Pietro Chiari', in *DBI*, 24 (1980) <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclo-pedia/pietro-chiari_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclo-pedia/pietro-chiari_(Dizionario-Biografico))> [accessed 2 June 2013]. On Marcello Lante see Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica da s. Pietro sino ai nostri giorni specialmente intorno ai principali santi*, 103 vols (Venice: Tipografia Emiliana, 1840–1878), 37 (1846), 113–14.

the abbot and her second child, a daughter (her eldest, born in France, is being brought up in Paris by the protagonist's mother).¹¹

Education and Disobedience in the novel

In her study of the eighteenth-century Italian novel, Tatiana Crivelli has highlighted the importance of the didactic function of such works, following in particular similar ideas expressed by J.P. Hunter about the British novel of the same period.¹² Crivelli observes the high frequency of discussions and episodes linked to the education, and in particular linked to the development of young people.¹³

These observations made by Crivelli and other critics, are the starting point of this analysis, and *La filosofessa italiana* offers a good perspective from which to look at this theme, especially considering its influence on contemporary and later novelists. The theme of education is a continual presence in the novel. The narrative itself is built around an educational path, following the transformation of the protagonist from a young and inexperienced woman into a mature and wise lady. It is not by chance that the first *articolo* of the novel is entitled 'Prima mia educazione': in a way which will soon become typical in such novels, Chiari begins with a chapter about the early years of the protagonist, revealing the details of her education in the boarding school.

This focus is included within a wider framework, which is clearly stated by the narrator-protagonist at the very beginning of the novel. In the pages where she

11 In the fourth volume, published in 1756, three years after the rest of the novel, she tries her best to flee from a lover, the Marquise of Rivoli, who wants to marry her. Only after a long series of adventures and misadventures does she finally agree to accept the marriage.

12 Hunter highlighted the importance of didacticism as a 'standard feature of the novel' adding that 'the rhetoric associated with didactic aims remains crucial to its tone, pace and effects', Hunter, *Before Novels*, p. 55. See also Crivelli, "*Né Arturo*", pp. 220–29.

13 'Nei romanzi si trovano facilmente pagine intere dedicate al problema dell'educazione e dell'istruzione della gioventù, nonché riflessioni sull'utilità sociale di una corretta formazione', Crivelli, "*Né Arturo*", p. 107.

explains her choice to write down her own adventures, her main purpose is to instruct her child: ‘se qualche vantaggio io desidero da questa fatica mia, quello si è unicamente di istruire mia figlia’.¹⁴ She then continues to describe the way in which this teaching will be performed:

Negli animi teneri della Gioventù sopra tutte le massime della più soda filosofia ebbe sempre forza l’esempio; e tra tutti gli esempj presso una figliuola ben nata, quello prevaler dee della Madre.¹⁵

Thus the story of the narrator-protagonist is presented from the beginning as the main example. From a macro-narrative perspective the exemplarity of the protagonist’s adventure is clearly stressed by her transformation. The first alteration is due to her age: at the beginning of the novel Madamigella d’Arville is sixteen,¹⁶ while by the end she is almost thirty.¹⁷ This development is accompanied by the acquiring of experience, which is somehow validated by her final actions in the novel, when she takes on the task of educating her own child¹⁸ and writes the memoirs of her life,¹⁹ both of which activities require an experienced person to perform them. The narrative is therefore both educative in its purposes, and a tale about the protagonist’s own maturation.

The pedagogical purpose of the protagonist’s adventures is carried out through examples often accompanied by didactic explanations. As Crivelli points out (discussing another novel by Chiari, but with a description that not surprisingly fits very well the *Filosofessa* and many others) the text can be seen as a collection of examples (‘esempi’) and principles (‘massime’) ‘offerto come vantaggioso da un punto di vista educativo: l’esempio di vita che in esso si ritrova dovrà far riflettere, ed

14 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 1.

15 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 1.

16 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 8.

17 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 236.

18 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 232–33.

19 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 237–38.

educare chi legga'.²⁰ 'Massime' and 'esempi' work also in a very different way, offering respectively an explicit vs implicit pedagogical approach.²¹ While principles are offered directly to the learner, and openly formulate a rule or a way to behave, examples display actions or behaviours, either negative or positive, that are then punished or approved accordingly.²² Characters' fates following a wrong or right choice show the reader if the behaviour is acceptable or has to be rejected on the spot.

The adventures of the young D'Arville describe an informal education based on her personal experience. This education accompanies her until the moment in which she finds her stable place in the world as a married woman. In this sense, the novel presents a sort of 'advanced' educative path happening after the 'formal' education received in the boarding school. Nonetheless, this second education appears even more important, because it is the one that leads to the definitive position of the protagonist in the world. In the case of *La Filosofessa*, the path is further complicated by the double career of the protagonist, first as a young woman, then under disguise as a young man.

The act of disobedience holds a pivotal role in the system of examples displayed in novels. It is a powerful narrative device that allows the subject to act in ways that would be judged inappropriate (or even unacceptable) in any other circumstances. It is the force that allows the protagonist to temporarily modify her gender, from Madamigella d'Arville to Signor Ricciard. Through this persona, she is able to act, behave and, at some points, even think as a man. This switch of identity, however, lasts only until Madamigella D'Arville and her parents recognise each other.

20 Crivelli, "*Né Arturo*", p. 108.

21 Crivelli analyses in depth the 'didascalismo esplicito' used in eighteenth-century novels, see "*Né Arturo*", p. 226-28.

22 The two, however, are also presented together, with the principle which follows the example and explains it, although this rule is not always followed. Sometimes it is enough for the author to mention that the choice followed from good reasoning or 'buona filosofia' (or it did not), without delving further into the matter. Antonio Piazza combined examples, precepts and explanations in his narratives in several ways: as it will be analysed in the following chapter on *L'omicida irreprensibile*.

As soon as she is seen again as a daughter, and meets her parents, any disobedient act suddenly becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible to perform, and even to consider.

Her adventures are clearly divided into two parts, which also correspond to the protagonist's different attitude toward disobedience. The first part is characterised by acts of direct and explicit disobedience against parental authority. In the second, after the recognition, she endures an internal conflict between her own desire to marry the Count of Terme, and the need to obey her parents. In this sense, there is no actual disobedience on the behalf of the protagonist: according to her re-established role as a daughter, she has to passively accept her parents' decisions.

Far from being a literary invention, the representation of education and disobedience in Chiari's novel reflects issues which were very present in Venice at the time, among aristocracy and élite classes more generally. In Venice the problem of disobedient children was an issue not only for individuals and families, but a matter of State. As Tiziana Plebani recently pointed out: 'Emergono con evidenza i due indiscussi protagonisti della scena politica veneziana, da cui erano dipesi fino allora i destini dei membri del suo patriziato: autorità dello Stato-ragione di Stato, autorità paterna-ragione familiare'.²³ From this perspective, two aspects in particular are to be considered: age, and marriage.

The age at which the protagonist begins her adventures is particularly significant: at the time of her escape D'Arville has just turned sixteen; and she is in her late twenties when she finally marries the Count. Fourteen to sixteen years is also the age of many other protagonists at the beginning of their adventures, which usually end up in their late twenties, or early thirties. Although marriageable age for Venetian

23 Tiziana Plebani, 'Ragione di Stato e sentimenti', p. 118.

laws started at fourteen (for men) and even earlier (twelve) for women, sixteen to eighteen is mentioned as being ideally the minimum age for marriage.²⁴

Canonical law shared this perspective. As Moroni describes it:

Quanto all'età dal diritto canonico è fissata a 7 anni compiuti, in cui termina l'età dell'infanzia e principia la puerile. Giusta tale diritto i genitori ponno fidanzare i loro figli impuberi; ma questi sponsali non saranno validi, se non dopo che i figli giunti all'età della pubertà (età nella quale l'uomo e la donna divengono atti alla generazione; e nella quale spuntano i primi peli nel pube: l'età puerile termina nei maschi a' 14 anni, nelle femmine a 12, ed incomincia quella della pubertà; la pubertà completa si fissa negli uomini a 18 anni, nelle donne a' 14 anni compiuti; l'età maggiore o pienissima pubertà è a 25 anni compiuti per ambo i sessi, ed allora incomincia l'età virile tenuta perfetta a 30 anni e che arriva sino a' 50, dopo la quale incomincia la vecchiezza).²⁵

Venetian law also set the age of consent at sixteen for men and fourteen for women. At that age they acquired some rights and obligations: 'hanno la libera amministrazione delle cose e dei beni loro, si possono far estrarre dalla tutela, possono comparire in giudizio, agire in nome proprio, e finalmente divengono capaci di qualunque atto civile'.²⁶ However, for many people this was far from anything similar to independence. Until tutelage (*tutela*) was active, decisions were left in the hands of tutors and parents. In many cases, in particular among Venetian aristocracy, the *tutela* of parents over their children remained active well after the age of consent.²⁷

24 'L'età dura sino agli anni sette [...] l'età pupillare dura sino ai quattordici [...]. Per le Venete leggi, anticamente l'età legittima, ossia il compimento dell'età pupillare, era l'età degli anni dodici, tanto nei maschi quanto nelle femmine; *Stat. Ven. lib. 2. cap. 1*. Ma con posteriori leggi si ordinò, che i maschi dovessero avere l'età di anni quattordici, e le femmine di dodici, quando vogliano uscire di tutela; [v.tutela; minore; femmina]. Quanto poi alla capacità di contrar matrimonio, si ricerca nei maschi l'età di anni quattordici, e di dodici nelle femmine [...] L'età più conveniente per altro è quella degli anni dieciotto; [...] quando però la malizia non superi l'età, nel qual caso non si può limitare tempo alcuno'. Marco Ferro, *Dizionario del diritto comune e veneto*, 2 vols (Venice: Santini, 1845), I, 688.

25 Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione*, XLIX, 131.

26 Ferro, *Dizionario del diritto*, II, 223.

27 Tiziana Plebani cites cases of individuals in their twenties or even thirties still under *tutela*. See

The distinction between ‘pienissima pubertà’ (25 years old), and ‘età virile perfetta’ (30 years old) mentioned in Moroni’s *Dizionario* is revealing. From this perspective, ‘youth’ emerges as a long period which begins with the age of consent and lasts until thirty years old, and even the last period is considered as a sort of uncompleted adulthood.²⁸ This perspective emerges also from civil laws and habits:²⁹ for instance, young aristocrats began their political life in the *Gran Consiglio* at 25.³⁰ However, even at that age they could not access all the magistratures of the Republic.³¹ The majority of Venetians got married between the age 25 and 30,³² precisely when D’Arville finally marries the Count of Terme.

for instance Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*, pp. 82–85. Tutelage could be eliminated through the *emancipazione*, an agreement between father and son made in front of a notary, ‘atto che mette le persone al di fuori dell’altrui potestà’, Ferro, *Dizionario del diritto*, I, 670 (the entire definition at 670–72). See also Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*, p. 83. Marco Cavina, *Il padre spodestato*, pp. 93–97. On *emancipazioni* among artisans and workers in the early modern period, particularly in Turin (but with observations still valid for Venice), see Sandra Cavallo, ‘Le emancipazioni. Una fonte per lo studio dei rapporti famigliari inter and intra-generazionali’, in *Famiglia e poteri in Italia tra Medioevo e Età Moderna*, ed. by Anna Bellavitis and Isabelle Chabot (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 2009), pp. 327–50.

- 28 ‘La giovinezza è scandita allora dal succedersi di una serie di riti di uscita e di entrata, che danno l’immagine di un processo di consolidamento per tappe, che garantisce una progressiva definizione dei ruoli dell’età adulta’, Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt, ‘Introduzione’, in *Storia dei giovani*, ed. by Levi and Schmitt, I, p. x.
- 29 The years between 25 and 30 as a crucial passage from youth to ‘perfect adulthood’ was a very common one. For instance, a well known guide about childbirth and nurturing indicated the age between 25 and 35 as ideal for wet nurses; Sebastiano Melli, *La comare levatrice istruita nel suo ufficio secondo le regole piu certe, e gli ammaestramenti piu moderni* (Venice: Recurti, 1721), p. 247. A treatise about the Tridentine Council was eager to explain that bishops should have considered priests as ready for confession and able to lead a parish at 25 (as the Council had said) and not 30. Giovanni Battista Guadagnini, *Nuovo esame di alcuni testi del Concilio di Trento relativi all’assoluzione de’ casi riservati ed all’approvazione de’ confessori* (Pavia: Monastero di S. Salvatore, 1787), p. 196.
- 30 The only opportunity to enter the *Gran consiglio* before that age was the tradition of the *balla d’oro*. When aristocrats turned 20, the day of St. Barbara, 4 December, participated in a lottery. Those who extracted a golden ball from a bunch of other *ballotte* had the opportunity to enter the assembly that year, without waiting further. See Ferro, *Dizionario del diritto*, I, 689 and Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, pp. 49–50.
- 31 They could enter the Senate only at 30, while to be part of a jury ‘nei consigli sovrani di XL’, the age was 33. Major magistratures and positions required older people. See Ferro, *Dizionario del diritto*, I, 689.
- 32 Scholars made different estimates about this point. Hunecke, who dealt only with Venetian aristocracy, for the second half of the century indicates an average age for marriage of 29.5 for men, and 22 for women. Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, pp. 198–99; 300–301. Marzio Barbagli on the other hand, working on statistics about other Italian states and without distinction of class, indicated different average ages for the actual marriage: 1701–05, Male: 29.9; Female: 28.8. 1740–44, Male: 31.4; Female: 29.3. 1780–84, Male: 31.6; Female: 28.0. Barbagli, *Sotto lo stesso tetto*, p. 492. Despite their difference, both estimates indicate the late twenties as the age when people get married more frequently.

It is not by chance that in the novel the protagonist's adventures happen in a specific time of her life, between her puberty and the 'età virile perfetta'. It was perceived as a time of transformation and instability, or as Linda Pollock puts it: 'i giovani si trovavano in una situazione di sospensione: sul punto di intraprendere una vita attiva, oppure facili prede delle attrattive del mondo'. Pollock also expresses the idea that, because of this situation, children were subject to parental control until later years.³³ The end of the instability occurs when D'Arville and the Count of Terme reached their thirties. It is only then that D'Arville is not considered a child and dependent on her family anymore, and both are deemed able to be fully independent. Marriage is the event that at the same time symbolises and allows such change.

There is a significant relationship between marriage and disobedience. The relationship emerges in particular in the second part of the novel, when D'Arville discovers the identity of her parents, and starts a new life as their (almost) legitimate daughter.³⁴ From that point on, the conflict between parents and their daughter over her marriage takes the core of the narrative. From this perspective, the novel reflects tensions typical of the Venetian élite in the second half of the eighteenth century.³⁵ In particular, the relation with disobedience is based on the political and social aspects of marriage.

Marriage was a fundamental passage in the life of Venetian aristocratic families, and was therefore carefully controlled both privately, and by the State.³⁶ Far

33 'Anche i figli più grandi quindi, richiedevano una vigilanza costante da parte dei genitori', Pollock, 'Il rapporto genitori-figli', in *Storia della famiglia*, ed. by Kertzer and Barbagli, II, 273.

34 For political expediency, she is said to be the illegitimate daughter of the Duchess' dead husband. However immediately after her recognition, birth parents take complete control over her.

35 Of course, the conflict was not limited to Venice, but witnessed in many European countries. See Renata Ago, 'Giovani nobili nell'età dell'assolutismo', in *Storia dei giovani*, ed. by Levi and Schmitt, I, 407–15.

36 The control of the marriage of children was also diffuse among non-aristocratic classes with high incomes that, even if excluded from political implications, used marriage for acquiring influence or wealth. As is the case with merchant and bourgeois families described by Anna Bellavitis, 'Family and Society', in *A companion to Venetian History*, ed. by Dursteler. See in particular pp. 332–39.

from being only a private choice,³⁷ marriage had public relevance, as it was the main way to secure economic and social position. The wealth of aristocratic families, originally based on trade since the sixteenth century had moved towards the property of land.³⁸ By the second half of the eighteenth century, this process had created great differences among families depending on their wealth. In an unpublished text written in the 1750s, Giacomo Nani divided aristocratic families depending on their wealth in a system of five classes which reflected their financial situation.³⁹ The richest classes (I and II) were also the most powerful and from them usually came the most influential political positions; the poorest (IV and particularly V) lived in modest financial conditions, or in the case of V, in extreme poverty. Families from the III class stood somehow in the middle, both for wealth and habits.

Volker Hunkecke has shown how marriage strategies varied depending on the class of the family. Such decisions were based on pragmatic reasons: the main preoccupation for the richest was not to disperse the family's estate.⁴⁰ The way to keep the estate undivided was to let only one son wed and inherit, while other sons

37 'Il corpo aristocratico, l'impalcatura umana della Repubblica, era formato da singoli individui, i quali tuttavia non contavano tanto come persone individuali quanto come rappresentanti di famiglie la cui storia era indissolubilmente legata a quella dello Stato', Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, p. 55.

38 'Nel Cinquecento stava per concludersi l'epoca in cui il commercio aveva costituito il fondamento della società veneziana e della ricchezza dei patrizi. In tempi in cui predominava la ricchezza mobile, c'erano tutte le ragioni di dividere il patrimonio tra tutti i figli, dando a ciascuno l'opportunità di tentare di far fortuna col commercio [...]. Ma dal Cinquecento in poi, quando la proprietà terriera divenne il fondamento principale della ricchezza patrizia, e conservarla divenne più importante che aumentarla, la prima preoccupazione dei patrizi, sempre che fossero riusciti a diventare proprietari terrieri e non fossero invece decaduti nella classe dei "plebei" [...] fu quella di preservare i loro beni dalla dispersione o dalla vendita. Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, p. 298.

39 See Giacomo Nani, *Saggio politico del corpo aristocratico della repubblica di Venezia*, Padua, Biblioteca universitaria, cod. 914. See also Piero del Negro, 'Giacomo Nani', *DBI*, 77 (2012) <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giacomo-nani_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giacomo-nani_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) [accessed 2 October 2013]; Piero del Negro, 'Giacomo Nani: appunti biografici', *Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova*, 40 (1971), 115–48.

40 Venetian legislation gave the opportunity to protect them through laws and legal institutions such as *fedecommissi*, which obliged inheritors not to divide the family estate. The *fedecommissio* was handed down from one generation to the other. See Paola Lanaro, 'Fedecommissi, doti, famiglia'.

remained bachelors.⁴¹ For women, the choice was rather to get married and leave the house, enter into a convent, or even stay at home without marrying. Unmarried brothers and sisters were given a monthly allowance, and lived with the family of their only married brother (this institution was called *fraterna*).⁴² The first three classes of aristocracy tended to follow this strategy at the risk, highlighted by Hunecke, to jeopardize the survival of the family over time.⁴³

Aristocratic families with scarce or no fortunes, had a different approach. In fact, they were inclined to get their children married as soon as possible. Unmarried children lived under the same roof with their parents and weighed on the family's expenses; therefore, among the IV and V class it was financially better for the family to get as many marriages as possible.⁴⁴

In the novel, D'Arville's situation mirrors that of the highest aristocratic classes. Talking with her mother about the possibility of marrying the Count of Terme, the reply she gets does not give much hope:

mi ripeteva bensì tutto il giorno, che a' figliuoli nell'elezione dello stato non si deve usare violenza; ma soggiungeva anche sempre, che l'elezione dello stato nostro regolata esser deve più dalla buona politica, che dalla passione.⁴⁵

The main point is that a daughter should choose her husband depending on the family's interest, not following her own feelings. There are two reasons for such

41 Differently from other countries, Venice did not base this passage on primogeniture, and every son was in theory equally entitled to the succession, regardless of the birth order. See Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, p. 201.

42 See Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, pp. 299–317.

43 As the family chances of legitimate reproduction were reduced to only one individual, rather than many.

44 'Il problema era meno acuto o addirittura inesistente nelle famiglie della nobiltà povera (classi IV e V), che non erano solite pianificare e limitare sistematicamente il numero dei matrimoni'. Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, p. 152. And in another passage, Hunecke comments: 'Se il grado dell'autonomia personale costituisce un indizio di modernità, i patrizi poveri erano uomini decisamente più moderni di quelli ricchi, prigionieri della loro Casa e delle sue tradizioni', Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, p. 250.

45 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 229. The mother's sentence displays an involuntary irony as she claims that children should be left to decide what to do with their life, while in the first volume she forced her daughter to take the veil.

opposition: one is based on interest, another on reputation. The Count is an aristocrat, but not a rich one: he was ‘figlio cadetto d’una illustre, ma povera casa, senza facoltà, senza impiego, senza speranze, qual figura avrebbe fatto nel mondo?’.⁴⁶ Moreover, D’Arville’s actions – the flight from the boarding school, her adventures as a man – have put her honour in a delicate position, as they can be maliciously interpreted as caused by an illegitimate passion:

collo sposar un amante di cui innamorata vi credono fino a perdere il senno,
volete voi giustificare le dicerie de’ maligni, e finire d’infamar da voi stessa
la vostra memoria. [...] Riflettete, Madamigella, che l’anima delle nostre pari
è l’onore.⁴⁷

D’Arville’s parents expect the child to obey their will, for the sake of the family and the family’s status: as the Prince points out to his daughter: ‘la vostra sottomissione, proseguiva il Principe, l’onestà vostra, la vostra prudenza mi fa sperare che ubbidirete alla cieca a’ miei desideri’.⁴⁸ Her good qualities (compliance, honesty, and caution) also imply a fourth one, which is her filial obedience. The Prince’s perspective – and preoccupations – reflects that of actual parents in Venice and elsewhere; while that of D’Arville mirrors that of those young Venetian men and women who had fallen in love with someone from a family with a lower income, either aristocrats or from other classes. As scholars have pointed out, disagreements between parents and children, especially about marriage, had increased during the eighteenth century.

The main problem of the protagonist at this point is to mediate between her parents’ will, and her individual desires. It is an internal contradiction between her own idea of virtue and that envisioned by her parents, who require her complete

46 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 17. It should be noted that the division seems to be mainly based on financial differences, and therefore sometimes it created problems among aristocratic families with different income, not only between different social classes.

47 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 20.

48 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 237-38.

subordination. As Tiziana Plebani points out, parental control required the cooperation of family members. Even though fathers could exert their power over children, it was nonetheless necessary that ‘i figli accettassero l’ideologia che stava alla base, e vi si identificassero senza frapporre ostacoli, e non decidessero di inscenare resistenze se non addirittura di ribellarsi alle imposizioni sulla loro vita’.⁴⁹ D’Arville’s obedience is characterised by an internal contradiction between the ideology required by parents, and her own. She comments: ‘A me conchiudeva la bocca la dipendenza dovuta a’ miei genitori’⁵⁰; but in her, love and interest create two equal but contrasting needs: ‘le passioni dell’animo nostro non sono libere, ma necessarie’,⁵¹ D’Arville argues, but she cannot solve such contradiction with an open act of disobedience, as done before. The change of gender roles from Ricciard to D’Arville, from a male to a female role, has also taken away most of her freedom: she complains that ‘non essere più nello stato di prima; d’aver perduto il bel privilegio della mia libertà; e di dover dipendere da una Madre, e da un Padre, quanto autorevoli presso la Corte, altrettanto disumani, e crudeli’.⁵² As a daughter, she cannot openly disobey her parents as she did before, so that the only escape she can think of against her forced marriage, is not a flight, but to take the veil.⁵³ It is a dramatic change if compared to what she has done since her flight from the boarding school, while she kept the male identity of Signor Ricciard.

The difference between these two parts of D’Arville’s role is particularly important. It shows the limits between acceptable and unacceptable disobedience in the novel. Gender roles play a pivotal role in such division: for instance, several actions performed by D’Arville as a man in the first part, are no longer allowed in the

49 Plebani, ‘Matrimoni segreti a Venezia’, p. 71.

50 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 238.

51 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 59.

52 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 3.

53 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 53.

second. Moreover, the first part delves into the link between education and disobedience, by pointing at mistakes and wrong behaviours of figures of authority, as the main cause of disobedient choices.

In fact, the act of disobedience is always accompanied by a number of reasons and causes that drive the protagonist (or other characters) to defy parental authority. In *La Filosofessa*, it is a chain of reactions that begins with the ambiguous and uncertain status of the protagonist (she does not know her parents nor their social rank).

This appears evident from her earliest years. She is put into the school when she is ten: ‘mi trovai serrata tra quattro muraglie in compagnia d’altre fanciulle mie pari, ivi tenute per il medesimo fine d’essere ben allevate’.⁵⁴ These first years are described as if Madamigella is completely oblivious of her past and future, ‘i miei pensieri si limitavano agli oggetti presenti’. She seems to live in a sort of ‘peaceful’ state of mind – peaceful because she is unaware of different situations and possibilities: ‘senza cercarne l’origine godevo delle dolcezze d’una vita, che mi pareva la migliore del mondo, perché non potevo conoscerlo se non conoscevo appena me stesso’.⁵⁵

However, and even though she lacks for nothing, as she grows up she feels a strange anxiety about herself, mostly because of an uncertainty about the origins of her position,⁵⁶ which is the main source of her troubled feelings: ‘non sapendo chi fossero i miei genitori; e non avendo amici o parenti, sù quali contar potessi per diritto legittimo di natura, il pensiero dell’avvenire mi inquietava assaissimo’;⁵⁷ the uncertainty is even reflected in the title of the second *articolo*, ‘incertezza dei miei genitori’. The ambiguity of her origins works as a sort of growing medium for her

⁵⁴ Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 4.

⁵⁵ This representation of early years is common also in other novels.

⁵⁶ ‘Nulla mi mancava del bisognevole; ma non sapevo donde tutto ciò mi venisse’, Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 4.

⁵⁷ Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 4.

future behaviour and choices. It is not only a matter of familiar boundaries: D'Arville openly recognises that her family's conditions will decide the future position she will have in the world.⁵⁸ Moreover anxiety increases with her age, reaching its peak as she turns sixteen.

The protagonist's uneasiness is set to increase dramatically after she receives a letter (the first she has ever received) signed by her mother. The letter stirs up her curiosity, mostly by trying to stop any enquiry about her mother's identity: 'non vi tormenti una vana curiosità di conoscermi; e badando soltanto a coltivare le belle qualità sortite dalla natura, aspettate pazientemente quel giorno, che neppur io saprei dirvi quanto sia ancora lontano'.⁵⁹ By chance, immediately after receiving this letter she also discovers that her mother has decided to put her in a convent. These two shocking disclosures arrive just as she is beginning her love affair with the Count of Terme. At this point, the clash between her desires and wishes and the decision of her mother is clear. This, then, is the cause that triggers the disobedient act of Madamigella d'Arville: she decides to run away from school.

The narrator is also extremely careful to present such a choice as mostly inevitable, and even to offer a justification for it. The first element which has to be considered, is the ambiguity of the protagonist's origins and situation:

la mia nascita era un arcano, la mia educazione austerissima, il mio destino contrario indubitamente alle mie inclinazioni. Una Madre sconosciuta: una governatrice politica, un amante perduto, un Chiostro, che m'aspettava, sono tutte cose, che giustificare potrebbero in faccia al mondo la mia risoluzione, se io non fossi la prima a condannarla acciocchè non serva ad altre d'esempio.⁶⁰

58 'La natura non ci distingue nel nascere; perchè a un di presso nasciamo tutti all'istessa maniera. Ci distingue nel nascere la Fortuna, perchè le circostanze della nostra nascita sono diverse', Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 4.

59 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 10.

60 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 36.

Although the love affair with the Count of Terme is important for her decision to escape, at this point love and passion do not seem to be the main cause for it. The source of distress lies rather in the maternal figure, and the ambiguity surrounding it. This ambiguity affects many aspects of the mother-daughter relationship, and jeopardizes any trust between them. D'Arville does not know the identity of her mother, who has never contacted her before. Moreover, it is impossible for her to trust a mother who has chosen such a drastic measure without consulting her. This loss of trust is also transferred to other authority figures, such as the school's headmistress, after discovering that the woman is an agent of her mother's plot. D'Arville's mother becomes an enemy above all, precisely because of her unruliness. D'Arville does not know what her mother thinks, and even after they are reunited she will always struggle to understand her mother's true thoughts.⁶¹ This unreliability is also shared by any other woman who, at different times, assumes a motherly role with Madamigella, such as the headmistress mentioned above. In the third volume of the novel this comes to include Madama di Cafardo, whose guidance and counsel are influenced by her own personal ambition; leaving her more interested in D'Arville's position at Court than in her happiness.⁶²

In the first part of the novel therefore, disobedience is caused by a conflict with parental authority; but it is also clear that the problem is not about that authority in general.⁶³ What is really under dispute is the use and modality of it, embodied by the command to enter into a convent without consent. Although this practice had been

61 This is also caused by the fact that her mother, who belongs to the highest ranks of aristocracy, follows a number of non-written but sacred rules of honour and social behaviour which are not easily understood by her daughter. In fact these rules are precisely those which create the main problem between the two, as they put social status and position in front of any individual's needs. The Duchess however remains an ambiguous figure, who did not avoid, in her youth, following her passions rather than political self-interest: her daughter is living evidence of that.

62 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 99–100.

63 The author is as eager to justify the decision taken by the protagonist, as he is to warn the reader about the seriousness of the protagonist's act: 'presentemente io conosco, che per una strada così precipitosa m'ha condotta la sorte dove pur condurmi volea; ma mi ci avrebbe forse condotta ancora per altre vie meno pericolose e fatali né il felice riuscimento d'un impresa biasimevole in me deve scemare l'orrore del mio delitto', Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 36.

customary among aristocratic families since the middle ages, and was still used in eighteenth-century Venice,⁶⁴ perceptions of it had changed dramatically. On the one hand, the Tridentine Council expressly forbade parents to force children into a religious life without their consent, a prohibition also repeated by writers of Religious precepts during the eighteenth century.⁶⁵ On the other hand, a decline in admissions, and an increase in the number of disputes between parents and children, indicate that Venetian society (in particular its aristocracy) was changing its perspective toward this practice.⁶⁶

The conflict between daughter and mother emerges in other parts of the novel. It is always accompanied by similar uncertainty and ambiguity around the identity and behaviour of parents, a feeling which increases in the course of the narrative. Immediately after her escape, for instance, the protagonist is shown to be proud of her disobedience, interpreting it as vengeance against her mother's plots: 'la riflessione che più m'allettava, era quella d'aver saputo sì ben deludere la loro vigilanza; d'essermi vendicata di mia Madre, che m'avea fatto proibire ogni commercio col Conte di Terme'.⁶⁷ At some point, her anonymous, mysterious parents become her adversaries: 'questo colpo, non ne posso più dubitare, mi vien da mia Madre. Essa mi leva co' suoi segreti maneggi lo sposo, perché sepolta mi vuole in una solitudine; ma no, non sarà, se mi dovesse costare la vita'.⁶⁸ Or later, 'fuggo da Avignone, per sottrarmi alle persecuzioni d'una Madre sconosciuta, e crudele, e devo casualmente

64 Federica Ambrosini suggests that in eighteenth-century Venice the rate of young aristocrats put in convents was still higher than other countries, Federica Ambrosini, 'Toward a Social History of Women in Venice', in *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City State (1297-1797)*, ed. by John Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 420–53 (424).

65 'I contrassegni della vocazione allo stato ecclesiastico, sono d'esservi entrati con retta intenzione', Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione*, CIII, 20–21. On religious writers who prohibited forced claustration in the eighteenth century see Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*, pp. 76–77. For an overview of the phenomenon, see Ambrosini, 'Toward a Social History', p. 424.

66 Ambrosini, 'Toward a Social History', p. 424.

67 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 43.

68 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 32.

inciampare a Parigi nelle mani d'un uomo, che suppongo mio Padre, e che morta mi vuole forse ancora, senza conoscermi per sua figliuola'.⁶⁹

The main point of this representation is the difference between good and bad parenting. The novel offers examples of both, sometimes comparing them. One of the first comparisons is made by D'Arville just after her flight: surprised by the fact that she has not been caught, she accuses the people of the boarding school of being incapable, saying that 'un padre attento, un uomo di senno poteva raggiungermi a poche miglia da Sorgues'.⁷⁰

The novel displays other examples of motherly and fatherly figures, both positive and negative. Each of these examples offers a direct relation between parental qualities and defects, and their children's behaviour. In the narrative, the educative approach of parents is also the one which sets the limits of acceptance for the disobedient acts of their children: bad parenting justifies (in part) disobedient actions as much as good parenting makes these actions unlawful and unacceptable.

The causal relation between parental actions and children's behaviour is part of an historical and cultural transformation that since the seventeenth century had started to challenge the nature of paternal power over children. It was a debate which involved the limits of parental control and *patria potestas*, and the system of family relationships.⁷¹ During the eighteenth century, the 'tyranny of fathers' is challenged in favour of a new system of relationships and control.

The challenge to the existing system of relationship was triggered by the emergence of new philosophic ideas on education and pedagogy. Two of the most

69 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 239.

70 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 43.

71 For a first overview, see Cavina, *Il padre spodestato*, pp. 171–224; Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*, pp. 69–91. See also *Figure della paternità nell'Ancien Régime*, ed. by Bianchi and Jori.

influential thinkers in this field were John Locke, and Fénelon, who both promoted an anti-authoritarian approach towards education.⁷²

John Locke's interpretation of parental control expressed in the *Second treatise on Government*, as well as in his *Thoughts concerning Education* had a great influence in Europe (including Venice) in the first half of the eighteenth century.⁷³

The sixth chapter of the *Second Treatise* is a critique of paternal control. Locke argues that power should be shared by parents and not limited to fathers only;⁷⁴ that it should not be 'absolute', but relative, according to the natural freedom to which every individual has, 'without being subjected to the Will or Authority of any other Man'⁷⁵ (including parents); and that it should end as soon as children are able to use their own reason. This third assumption is particularly important, as it suggests that the age of independence (in Locke's words the 'Age of Discretion') corresponds to the time in which he or she reaches 'the capacity of knowing that Law': 'Which is supposed

72 Locke's ideas on education were rooted in his philosophical system and proved extremely important for Enlightened *philosophes* in the eighteenth century. On Fénelon's pedagogy see now two special issues of the journal *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde*, 30 and 31 (2003): *Les Aventures de Télémaque. Trois siècles d'enseignement du français*, ed. by Nadia Minerva. In particular, Carlo Pancera, 'L'approccio non-autoritario nelle pedagogia di Fénelon', 30 (2003), 46–60; [online] < <http://dhfles.revues.org/1520> > [accessed 2 December 2014]; Henk Hillenaar, 'Le projet didactique de Fénelon auteur de Télémaque: enjeux et perspectives', 30 (2003), 11–23, [online] <<http://dhfles.revues.org/1478>> [accessed 2 December 2014].

73 An edition of Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (London: Churchill, 1693) was published in Venice in 1735: *Della educazione dei fanciulli scritto in lingua inglese dal signor Locke, indi tradotto in lingua francese dal signor Coste, e finalmente tradotto in lingua italiana dall'edizione francese fatta in Amsterdam l'anno 1733*, 2 vols (Venice: Pitteri, 1735). Dionigi Ramanzini is the author an abridged version, *Arte dell'educare i fanciulli di Giovanni Loche* [sic] *inglese ridotta ad aforismi con alcune giunte* (Verona: [n. pub.], 1736). The *Treatises* on the other hand were translated only in the 1770s, also due to the Church's censorship. On this aspect see Gustavo Costa, 'John Locke' in *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, ed. by Adriano Prosperi, Vincenzo Lavenia and John A. Tedeschi, 4 vols (Pisa: Normale, 2010) II, 930–31. Nonetheless, French editions were available and easily accessible among Italian intellectuals, and from there got even to the broader public. For the diffusion of Locke in Italy see Arturo Graf, *L'Anglomania*, pp. 377–91. See also Gustavo Costa, 'Vico tra Napoli e Venezia' in *De Florence à Venise: études en l'honneur de Christian Bec*, ed. by François Livi and Carlo Ossola (Paris, Press Paris Sorbonne, 2006), pp. 407–18 (416–17). For a bibliography of translations see the website by John C. Attig: <<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/locke/bib/>> [[accessed 20 November 2014].

74 'If this supposed Absolute Power over Children has been called Parental, and thereby have discover'd, that it belong'd to the Mother too' and authority of the fatherhood', John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* [London, 1680], ed. by Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 304.

75 Locke, *Two Treatises*, p. 304.

by that Law, at the Age of one and twenty years, and in some cases sooner'.⁷⁶ From this perspective, independence is acquired only by age, and not by other means (above all, a change in the marital status as was traditionally intended).⁷⁷

Locke also mentions parental duties: 'to take care of their Off-spring, during the imperfect state of Childhood', and 'an obligation to nourish, preserve, and bring up their Off-spring'.⁷⁸ That parents had duties was of course an old idea expressed by treatises and even religious literature over a long period.⁷⁹ The main change during the eighteenth century is in regard to what is expected from parents, mothers in particular. New ideas promoted an active involvement of mothers in several aspects related to childcare and education. In most cases these activities – especially among the élite – had been usually left to other roles (servants, nurses, tutors and governesses). An example of new responsibilities attributed to mothers can be found in an anonymous work published in Venice in 1765, entitled *L'educazione delle Fanciulle*.⁸⁰ It is a collection of letters addressing a noblewoman, concerning the education of daughters. Topics include breastfeeding, childcare, education in early years, as well as books and topics that should be studied later.⁸¹ The book clearly addresses female readers of the higher classes, suggesting an ideal model of motherhood to be followed.⁸²

76 Locke, *Two Treatises*, p. 307.

77 During the eighteenth century, this vision was promoted by Enlightened and Reformist thinkers, and his most famous advocate was certainly Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and his *Émile, ou de l'éducation* that, published in 1762 (La Haye: Néalme), remains one of the most influential works of the century.

78 Locke, *Two treatises*, p. 306, 311

79 Pollock, 'Il rapporto genitori-figli', pp. 263–64, cites William Gouge's treatise *On Domesticall Duties*, 'uno dei più noti manuali di comportamento inglesi del XVII secolo' and pointed at the same parental duties.

80 *L'educazione delle fanciulle* (Venice: Palese, 1765).

81 On these topics see Barbagli, *Sotto lo stesso tetto*, 336–61; Ago, 'Giovani nobili nell'età dell'assolutismo', 384–89.

82 Locke's *Thoughts concerning Education* could have been a possible model for the text, as the order of exposition is similar (for instance, treating topics related to the body, and then passing to behaviour and habits). But Rousseau's *Emile* may be another possibility. Besides, this is a structure shared by many other works of this kind. Significantly, a copy of *L'educazione delle fanciulle* held in Bologna's Archiginnasio library, is bound together with two works also dedicated to girls' education: Barthelemy-Claude Graillard de Graville, *L'amico delle fanciulle*,

There existed different perspectives about the attitude of parents, both fathers and mothers, toward their children. Opinions may vary: some may praise affection towards children, others warned parents of the dangers of excessive love. In all cases, what emerges is the idea that the attitude of parents has a deep influence on how children grow up. The pivotal role given to education, and the idea that the future actions of a child were a direct consequence of the education he or she received also moved the attention to the adults in charge of such education. They had a clear responsibility over the future of their children (or pupils).⁸³

What is more important about these ideas is that, as Plebani points out:

Le idee di Locke e questo ampio dibattito non se ne stavano chiuse nei libri ad aspettare che qualcuno andasse a rovistare tra i polverosi scaffali di una libreria, bensì alimentavano le conversazioni nei caffè, le pratiche e le idee di una cultura che utilizzava molti strumenti e linguaggi.⁸⁴

I would argue that the reception of Fénelon's ideas had a very similar effect on the eighteenth-century debate. Even more important in this sense is the fact that the French author's writings were widely diffused during the century, both in original and as translations.⁸⁵ An interesting example of the circulation and elaboration of these ideas can be found in the introduction to the Venetian edition of Fénelon's *De*

tradotto dal francese dal Sig. Conte Ga. Gozzi (Venice: Occhi, 1778) and Fénelon, *Della educazione delle Fanciulle... tradotta da Luigi Roverelli faentino* (Venice: Palese, 1788).

83 Another effect of this transformation was that educative action became an activity which could be learned and whose effects and results could be judged. But this at the same time challenged the idea of parental authority, which was previously granted by the role itself, and was now negotiable. Its legitimacy came from the activity and behaviour of parents and tutors: if their educational action did not meet the expectations of the learner, their authority would be compromised.

84 Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*, p. 73–74.

85 The diffusion of Fénelon's works, and in particular the *Télémaque* were widely used as teaching tools for learning the French. Anna Luigia Villani, 'Il *Telemaco* di Fenelon nelle biblioteche, università e istituti d'istruzione religioso a Roma. Strumento pedagogico-linguistico, supporto per una formazione morale e culturale o oggetto di una disputa teologica?', in *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde*, 31 (2003), 207–21; and in the same journal, 30 (2003), Fernando Cipriani, 'Télémaque roman pédagogique. Quelques nouvelles orientations des études', 61–71, [online] < <http://dhfles.revues.org/1525> > [accessed 20 September 2014].

l'éducation des filles (1687), published in 1748. Presenting the text to readers, the Italian translator wrote:

Mirabile è poi, dice, la sua maniera di rendere soave agli stessi giovanetti l'educazione, che suol comparire loro così spiacevole: e ciò col togliere alla scuola tutto il noioso ed amaro della sua troppo scrupolosa regolarità, e tutto quell'eccessivo rigore che per lo più si adopera in essa, e coll'introdurre in sua vece l'uso artificioso e non mai abbastanza laudevole delle istruzioni non apparenti, talchè per mezzo di queste si danno di buona voglia a ciò, che si vuole esiger da loro, sol perché si nasconde di volerlo esigere, e si trovano per tal modo felicemente ingannati vivendo in mezzo alla più esatta ed alla miglior disciplina, quando appunto si lusingano d'andare sciolti da quella. Quindi screditando la soverchia austerità, ed asprezza, che comunemente si adopera o da' genitori male avveduti, o dagli educatori indiscreti, la quale per lo più finisce in rendere grave e rincrescevole a' giovani l'autorità paterna ed assai spregevole la persona del lor maestro, le sostituisce quella giudiziosa mansuetudine, ch'ei vuol per anima di qualunque educazione, e per cui non rendendosi mai odiosa la persona la quale inscuisce, e non disgustando mai l'istruzione perocchè condita ed aspersa di mille dolcezze, si conducono i giovani come per mano dove si vuole, e si avvezzano a salirsene volentieri per fino al Tempio della virtù.⁸⁶

In this interpretation, the learning process is transformed into a pleasurable activity that should avoid the 'troppo scrupolosa regolarità' as well as the 'eccessivo rigore'. Persuasion, and an education 'aspersa di mille dolcezze' will allow the tutor-teacher to guide the young person without using any 'asprezza'. This form of *utile dulci* was to be transferred from treatises to novels and other works of *letteratura amena*.⁸⁷

Chiari's novel gives a perfect example of the diffusion of similar ideas in literature. Taking just two examples: the assumption that a correct use of reason can legitimate actions taken independently from parental control, recalls Locke's perspective on the 'age of reason'. On the other hand, the relationship between

86 Fénelon, *Della educazione delle giovani, opera di Monsignore di Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon* (Florence: Moucke, 1748), p. xxiii. Quoted in Maugain, *Documenti bibliografici*, p. 16.

87 In fact, the main example of this transfer is precisely Fénelon's novel (written for the education of the Duke of Burgundy) *Les Aventures de Télémaque*.

disobedience and her mother's behaviour, or the frequent reference to what parents should or should not do, are also cases in point.

The long conflict between D'Arville and her parents however, shows that traditional, authoritarian approaches still remained, with fathers (and mothers) who extended their control over children well after the age of consent. As Marco Cavina argues:

La *patria potestas* del tardo Settecento italiano, nella sua incontestabile durezza contro cui abbiamo visto polemizzare gli autori illuministi, restava rigorosamente agnatzia e si armava ancora della perpetuità. Formalmente il figlio, vivo il padre, non “cresceva mai”. Secondo la comune opinione dei giuristi, lo stesso “calor giovanile”, talora giuridicamente rilevante, si considerava perpetuo in relazione alla patria potestà, e quantomeno sino all'età di cinquant'anni.⁸⁸

The issue of paternal authority was not limited to the parent-child relationship. Similar patterns of disobedience and authority are found in relationships between teacher and pupil, and in those between master and servant. During the military campaign in Italy, the protagonist – in the role of Signor Ricciard – meets a young woman who is fleeing from a group of soldiers. At the beginning, the episode seems only a comical interlude. They should share a room, but there is only one bed, with all the embarrassment and irony which follow. However, the guest turns out to be a young man *en travesti*: he is ‘figliolo del Marchese N.N. Che da cinque anni addietro mi tiene ad educare in un Collegio lontano di qua poco più di quindici miglia’.⁸⁹ This young pupil has endured five years of bad education:

m'è toccato un Maestro, il quale par che studj tutte le maniere più facili per farmi diventare ignorante. Avendo io una inclinazione per la Storia, per la Geografia, per le Matematiche, che ponno farmi fare una bella figura nel Mondo, egli non sa parlarmi, che di Grammatica; e questa continua

⁸⁸ Cavina, *Il padre spodestato*, p. 202.

⁸⁹ Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 43.

grammatica, lunga cinque, e più anni, m'è venuta tanto a noja, che mi son messo al punto di non voler più sentirme discorrere.⁹⁰

Even worse, the teacher used to beat him very hard: 's'è messo a volermeli insegnare colle mani, battendomi come fossi un giumento, che ricusasse la soma. In fra l'altre volte moltissime tre giorni fa me ne diede tante, perchè avevo fallato un latino, che credetti mi volesse accoppiare'.⁹¹

The story of the young Marquis is followed this time by a long commentary by the narrator, in which she attacks the system of education embodied by the fugitive's teacher.

Che razza d'educazione è mai questa, dicevo dentro di me, che danno taluni alla nobile gioventù? [...] Il primo maestro della gioventù deve essere il genio; e quando questo sia coltivato, è facile, senza sferzate, che ognuno nella sua linea diventi erudito. [...] La strada più profittevole per ammaestrare la gioventù, è la meno noiosa; e quella le riesce meno noiosa, che trova essere la più corta.⁹²

A 'traditional' form of education, which is often carried out by ambiguous figures or in ambiguous situations, is here challenged with a different, 'new' and modern approach. In this example the dichotomy involves 'official' education: traditional methods of schooling, corresponding to the typical *cursus studiorum* based on Latin, are attacked as useless and boring; while a pedagogical method based on the aptitudes of pupils, and on practical and pleasurable learning, is praised. This second pedagogy is probably based on the Italian language (while the first is traditionally in Latin) and on the use of exempla, experience and probably a different corpus of texts, including the novel, whose purpose is precisely that of teaching *through* entertainment. The reader of *La filosofessa* easily recognises that this second method is also the one

90 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 129–30.

91 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 130.

92 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 130–31.

undertaken by the protagonist, in further evidence of its success over the traditional one.

The relationship between teacher and student is not very different from that between parents and children. The main contradiction remains that between the aptitudes and desires of young people, and rules and orders enforced by a superior, older figure. A further possible analogy is about the parental figure: the father's attitude toward his son is slightly ambiguous: the pupil does not know if his letters of complaint do not reach him because of the teacher, or simply because he does not care to reply, or answer them.

As had happened with Madamigella D'Arville, even in the case of Marquis N.N. the disobedient act is, if not justified, at least understood: 'non potei a meno di compatirlo nel cuor mio, benchè non lasciassi di civilmente riprenderlo'.⁹³

An example of a relationship between master and servant, and of negative disobedience, happens when Ricciard-D'Arville arrives in Venice. After spending some time enjoying the Ridotto and other pleasures of the city, she is suddenly arrested and kept prisoner for a night, by order and account of a Venetian man. The next day, the man frees her, explaining that she has been mistaken for his own fugitive servant, Rosaura. As soon as the old man enters into the cell and looks at her, he understands the mistake: 'Ah! soggiunse, scusatemi. Voi non siete la mia Cameriera. I miei ordini sono stati male eseguiti; o gli esecutori della Giustizia ingannati furono dall'apparenza'.⁹⁴ Then he tells her the story of Rosaura.

Costei fin da Bambina fu levata, per opera mia, dalle miserie incredibili della sua nascita; ed allevata con morbidezza in casa mia, vivente mia moglie, come se ella in lei avesse avuta una figlia. Sono quindici giorni e più, che

93 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 130.

94 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 148.

m'è fuggita di casa; e quando credevo, che fosse in lontano paese, l'ho veduta cogli occhi miei girar per Venezia mascherata da uomo.⁹⁵

In the man's words, the figure of young servant and that of daughter overlap almost completely. Rosaura's master's entire description plays with this superimposition. It is also interesting to note that in response to an act of disobedience made by the servant-daughter the master-father solicits and obtains the intervention of authorities. This kind of mediation between the State and the family was increasingly frequent in Venice, particularly in the 1750s, when *La filosofessa italiana* was published: Tiziana Plebani has noted that such intervention of the State in family business increases in the 1750s. In that decade, one third of the cases followed by the *Inquisitori di Stato* involved the behaviour (and disobedience) of daughters and sons.⁹⁶

Rosaura and her master are recurring characters in *La filosofessa*. The disobedience of the servant lasts longer than any other: the protagonist (still under the name of Ricciard) finds her for the first time in Paris, along with Signor d'Albevit, the adventurer who had seduced and convinced her to flight. There, D'Arville offers a long and harsh reprimand:

vergognatevi di voi stessa, Madama; ed essendo allevata sì bene, vi serva di castigo, e di pena il vostro solo rossore. [...] Scuotetevi, Madama carissima, da un letargo troppo fatale alla vostra virtù; e se non vi atterrisce l'infamia vostra presente, almeno vi mettano orrore le conseguenze indubitabili del vostro avvenire.⁹⁷

The disobedience of the protagonist is mirrored in the story of Rosaura; the latter is used as a negative example of all the risks hiding in disobedience. The comparison is underlined by the narrator: 'Ancor io era fuggita da una casa

95 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 148.

96 Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*, p. 54.

97 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 186.

d'educazione; ma non già per far, come dessa, una trista figura nel Mondo. Essendo stata nella necessità indispensabile di regolarmi così, ho procurato in appresso, che tutte le azioni mie giustificassero la mia fuga'.⁹⁸ This is probably the most open justification of her disobedient behaviour, but it also tries to draw the limit of disobedience. The reprimand of D'Arville to Rosaura in this sense is a collection of rules that set the strict path that a disobedient subject has to follow in order not to jeopardise her or his own future.

Other examples in the novel do not involve directly disobedience and its actors, but centre on the figures of adventurers, gamblers, bankrupt people, fallen women or tricksters. All these stories appear as many caveats to the young disobedient subject. A particular role is that held by adventurers.

It is difficult for a young woman or man to behave appropriately after having started down a path different to that indicated by parents, adults and tradition. The risk of losing the status and dignity that they were born into is always high. In this sense, adventurers offer the perfect example of the dangers of disobedience. They embody two warnings: on the one hand, they represent the 'future', and what the disobedient subject might become if they deviate too much from the path; on the other hand, they are examples of dangerous relationships that should be avoided. Besides the case of Rosaura and her love for the adventurer d'Albevit, the novel displays many other examples of them. Finally, adventurers are used to show that breaking parental rules might also lead to more dangerous actions, including crime.⁹⁹

Examples of the negative effects of disobedient behaviour are not the only ones present in the novel. The text displays also a number of examples which are not related directly to disobedience, but more broadly to education. In this sense the

⁹⁸ Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 188.

⁹⁹ The best portrait of an adventurer in *La filosofessa* is certainly that of Tartar, who has a role rather like an antagonist of the entire narrative. Tartar is an archetype of the man without scruples, being among other things a thief, a spy and a killer.

purpose of some stories is to show and inform, rather than to warn the reader. This is directly related to the model of education embodied by novels of the period, which are used to show and educate through examples and indirect experience, rather than through theoretical explanations.

The library of the learner

The first letter sent to D'Arville by her mother centres on her education, encouraging her to take the most from what she is learning in the school, as a way to cultivate her own talents and qualities 'sortite dalla natura'.¹⁰⁰ The education she has been receiving at school is not different from that which is required of all young women from the upper classes: she has been taught to play the cembalo and sing¹⁰¹ (and she will use these skills several times later in the novel); she also learnt 'la lingua inglese, la tedesca e l'italiana' which helped her to acquire a wider knowledge than that usually accorded to her gender.¹⁰² Above all though, the main source for her own education comes from books.

The genres quoted by D'Arville as those she reads the most, forming the corpus of her education, belong to the so called *letteratura amena*: 'un numero innumerabile di Storie, di Poesie, di Romanzi, e di viaggi'.¹⁰³ Even the way of reading them is different from more traditional genres: these are books that she 'divorav[a] leggendo'.¹⁰⁴ In fact the presence of similar books is continual in the novel, starting from Pasinelli's prefatory note, and continuing through the narrative. The titles quoted during the narrative are of different genres, not only novels. There are some

100 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 10.

101 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 7.

102 'Ed ognuna di queste [...] aveva contribuito non poco ad arricchire il mio spirito di cognizioni superiori ancora al mio sesso', Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 7.

103 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 7.

104 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 7.

classics, such as Scarron's *Roman comique*,¹⁰⁵ and Cervantes' *Quixote*.¹⁰⁶ The latter is presented as a model for her memoirs, suggesting that her adventures are those of a female Quixote:

Ripensando che l'ingegnoso Romanzo del *don Chisciotte* era una critica arguta, ma misteriosa di tutti gli eroi romanzeschi, non meno che di tutti gli altri libri di questo genere, mi venne in idea di scrivere le mie avventure sullo stesso modello. Una femmina o compagna, o sorella di Don Chisciotte, che contaffacesse ne' suoi avvenimenti quanto si leggeva accaduto ad altre donne, di cui abbiamo memorie scritte da loro medesime, mi pareva oggetto assai buono e ridicolo per un libro di passatempo, in cui registrando le avventure mie, poteva modestamente censurare le altrui.¹⁰⁷

But there are also essays in which, though apparently not corresponding to existing books, nonetheless recall fashionable titles of that century. For instance, during her flight she reads many times and 'con un diletto incredibile' a book entitled *La filosofia per le donne* and another called *L'arte di ben pensare*.¹⁰⁸

From her time at school Madamigella D'Arville presents herself as an avid reader, keeping this habit both when she becomes Signor di Ricciard, and afterwards. For instance, when appointed as esquire of the Duchess of... [*sic*] (her mother, even though she does not know yet), the protagonist finds herself with a lot of time at her disposal, and spends most of it reading:

Tutto il tempo, che m'avanzava del mio nuovo impiego, ed era moltissimo, lo spendevo leggendo. Ogni libro, che m'insegnasse a pensar bene, era la mia

105 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 108. The book is quoted in relation to the satirical description of a theatrical company (almost certainly Chiari's portrait of Sacchi's company), suggesting similarities between the two.

106 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 86–87. On the presence of Quixote in eighteenth-century Italian literature, see Franco Fido, 'Viaggi in Italia di Don Chisciotte'.

107 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 86–87.

108 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 48. The first title recalls Giovanni Cattaneo's *Il filosofismo delle belle* (Venice: Tavernin, 1753), published in the same year as *La filosofessa*. On the other hand, *L'arte di ben pensare* recalls a work of moralistic precepts by a Jesuit: Simone Bagnati, *Arte di ben pensare, ovvero pensieri quotidiani per tutto l'anno. Semestre secondo*. It had been published for the first time in Naples (Novello De Bonis, 1712), and then twice more in Venice, by Domenico Lovisa (1718) and Carlo Todero (1750). In the novel, the two books are said to be translated respectively from French and English.

delizia. Tutti gli altri mi dilettevano, e li leggevo con piacere incredibile: di modo che andavo arricchendo il mio spirito di tali, e tante cognizioni diverse, che non si discorreva più di cosa alcuna, la quale mi riuscisse nuova.¹⁰⁹

She makes a very similar remark when, forced into immobility by her first pregnancy, she spends most of her time reading: ‘tutto il mio divertimento si riduceva a leggere e a conversare; ma quello più mi piaceva di questo, perocché, traendone più profitto, ne restavo più soddisfatta’.¹¹⁰

From this quotation also emerges the educative role played by books – particularly those of *letteratura amena* – in the novel. Their function is double: on the one hand, it is related to the acquisition of different (and differentiated) information (‘cognizioni diverse’). The learning process is naturally connected with the practice of conversation, so that these notions are immediately put to use in practices of sociability. However there is also another function attributed to such books, presented as equally important: they substitute for direct experience.

This is a pivotal idea in understanding the way in which the novel as a genre is conceived; and a cornerstone upon which is built the educative purpose of these texts. Novels and books of *Letteratura amena* in general gave the young protagonist ‘di giorno in giorno qualche nuova magnifica idea di quel gran mondo, che non avevo ancora veduto; e per cui mi pareva d’esser nata’.¹¹¹ A similar idea is implied in the moment she meets the Duke (first husband of the Duchess her mother), during her first trip to Paris. Describing the Duke’s character and temper, she declares that she already knew some of his features as she had read about them in books, or heard about them in various conversations.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 130.

¹¹⁰ Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 157.

¹¹¹ Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 7.

¹¹² ‘Avevo letto in più libri, e mi era stato detto da molti, che il Duca.... era d’un bizzarrissimo umore, di maniere obbliganti, ed assai ben veduto alla Corte’, Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 114.

Thus, books might help to acquire information on many different subjects, even those related to ‘current affairs’. The representation of real people in novels and other works is also at the centre of the debate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ novels which emerges in *La Filosofessa*.

In Paris, after having regained her original identity, Madamigella D’Arville is told by her parents about the existence of a novel (defined with the slightly pejorative term ‘romanzetto’), entitled *La figlia errante*, which had recently been circulating in Paris. The book was based on her adventures since her flight from the boarding school until the present; but its main purpose was to attack and dishonour her.¹¹³ The book is part of a wider strategy deployed by her enemies (which are also those of her natural mother and father) to put them in a bad light in front of the Court; with the rest of the calumnies mostly diffused through rumours and gossip.

La figlia errante is an example of a bad novel, precisely because it aims solely at slandering someone.

stampato con un’antidata di qualche anno, per meglio colorire la cabala, tutto il restante intessuto di menzogne, e finzioni inventate a capriccio, senza verosimiglianza, senza coerenza, senza intreccio di sorte alcuna, e senza carattere. Basta prenderlo in mano, e confrontarlo con queste mie memorie, per vederne la gran differenza.¹¹⁴

All characteristics of this novel are bad, including style, content and plot; even its bibliographical status (with the indication of a false date in the frontispiece) is used to stir things up about the author and the context. At the end of *La filosofessa*, D’Arville will compare *La figlia errante* and her own memoirs, stressing the difference between a true story (her own) and a novel ‘pieno di menzogne’, such as the other one. Although in this case the narrator seems to focus solely on the different degrees of

113 ‘Un Romanzetto a capriccio intitolato La Figlia errante. Questo solo titolo basta a farvi comprendere che il libro le farà poco onore. Non bisogna dar all’Autore il piacere di vedere accreditate dal fatto le sue maligne invenzioni’, Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 74.

114 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 90.

realism in each novel, the difference in purpose is equally (if not more) important. After all, her memoirs have been written for her daughter and ‘le terranno luogo d’una continua istruzione’¹¹⁵ for all the examples presented in them, in sharp contrast to the other novel, which is a bad book, and ‘un libro cattivo si scredita da sé medesimo’.¹¹⁶

Honour and money

Among the various stories and events which happen to the learning protagonist, it is possible to identify two topics which occur more frequently than others, indicating two different preoccupations. The first is about wealth, possession and the management of money; the second is about honour, social status, the rules of society, mostly in reference to an aristocratic environment. The novel offers a good amount of advice about both issues, showing a number of both negative and positive examples. The topic of money is investigated in many forms and takes different shapes. One of the main preoccupations of D’Arville, as soon as she leaves the school with her servant Celestina, is how to get money to sustain themselves. When the young fugitive expresses her fear that they will soon spend all the money in their possession, it is the servant who offers a solution: ‘I soldi che abbiamo, siano i nostri amici migliori: non aspettiamo altronde, che da loro il nostro sostegno; e perchè non ci manchino collo spenderli, spendendoli ancora, voglio che li mettiamo a profitto’.¹¹⁷ This section of the novel (corresponding not surprisingly to her identity as ‘merchant’) includes also the first appearance of D’Arcoré and Duli, respectively a rich bourgeois and a travelling merchant.

115 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 6.

116 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 89.

117 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 43.

Signor d'Arcoré is, in fact, one of the most positive figures of the novel, depicted as the perfect gentleman, an example of integrity and 'good philosophy'. D'Arcoré is a model of generosity, to the extent that his courtesies and invitations at some point are defined by the protagonist as 'dolci violenze'.¹¹⁸ However the way in which he manages his money is not linked to business. He lives by managing the wealth inherited from his father.

Restando questo signore padrone del suo, dopo la morte del Padre ha rinunziato al traffico, e non pensa, che a godere di quanto ereditò, senza però rovinarsi. Egli non eccede nelle sue spese; ma non vuole, che gli manchi il bisogno. In vece di dar a mangiare il suo ad una truppa di servitori nemici giurati del loro Padrone medesimo, si contenta d'esser servito senza fasto, e lo fa godere agli amici. [...] La nobiltà nol guarda di mal occhio, perché non ambisce di starle del pari. Tutto il resto della città lo ama, perchè fa a tutti del bene.¹¹⁹

D'Arcoré does not actually represent a capitalist, or a businessman. His way of managing his estate recalls rather that of an aristocrat who is not directly involved in business. The passage is also interesting in that it mentions the fact that the city's aristocracy does not despise D'Arcoré, as he does not try to equal them. His true quality, the one that makes this character an example for everyone, is therefore his temperance, and modesty. This purpose is made evident by the contrary example of his sister, his exact opposite:

quanto egli è generoso, ella altrettanto è sordida e interessata. Ebbe già per marito un Presidente del Parlamento; e per la sordidezza sua lo fece anzi tempo morire di crepacuore. Non vi dico altro, se non che arrivò a foderargli una vesta da Camera con le Tesi, e co' Sonetti stampati in seta, che gli

118 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 57.

119 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 60–61.

venivano dedicati. Quando il Presidente si metteva quella vesta, era tutto filosofia, e poesia dalla testa alle piante.¹²⁰

In this case, the negative quality of D'Arcoré's sister is her desire to show off her own *grandeur*, accompanied as it is by greed and dinginess. The text seems to imply that her fault is an excessive ambition, visible also in practices which are typical of the high aristocracy (such as the request for dedicatory poems). The novel also displays several examples of bad financial management, such as that of Signor Duli, a merchant who left his family after losing a fortune with a bad investment; or that of Sig. Alliotte, the portrait of a poor nobleman (and possible portrait of a typical *barnabotto*). In this case, the nobleman mixes 'due cose rare a vedersi, cioè una generosità estrema con un eccessivo interesse [...] Quando nel gioco non guardava misura alcuna, nelle spese domestiche era capace di sofisticare le notti intere, per risparmiare due soldi'.¹²¹

Alliotte is a perfect example of the clash between a mentality linked to status – which requires the performance of certain activities, which are however expensive and perhaps cannot be afforded by his family – and personal self-interest. Interestingly enough, due to the actions of his companion, the protagonist is forced to behave with honour, and not out of self-interest:

L'economia del mio Compagno mi fece in questa occasione esser prodiga; e sebbene non avevo ne' capitali, ne' rendite, che potessero reggere a quelle spese, mi piaceva meglio esser povera, che dimostrarmi vile, e parer un' ingrata.¹²²

This passage sums up the coexistence of these two different tensions, one related to interest and money, and the other related to status, which can be found at several other points in the novel. It is a coexistence which has been described by

120 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, I, 61.

121 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 39.

122 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, II, 44.

Michael McKeon in relation to eighteenth-century Britain. McKeon describes that century as the moment in which ideas and behaviours related to the traditional structuring of society through *status* are increasingly accompanied by 'new' conceptions of class, which will become hegemonic in the following century. McKeon reveals how the coexistence of these two visions emerges in the novel in particular.¹²³

Venetian aristocracy faced the conflict generated by the coexistence of *status* and wealth. The main issue was that social status requires the display of symbols, which are used to confirm the difference in front of other classes. As Hunecke points out, the number of servants and above all, gondolas, gives an indication of the social and financial position of the family. For the sake of social appearances, families might even decide to spend more than they could afford.¹²⁴

Aristocrats from the I and II class may not have any problem with this: their wealth was used to protect and reinforce their status, both in social events, and in politics. The problem was for noblemen and noblewomen of lower classes. As in the example of Alliotte in the novel, in the case of the V class, the poorest aristocrats, the absence of wealth made any reference to their status grotesque, almost comical. People like them lived from hand to mouth, often subsidised by the State through official assignments and *sinecure*.¹²⁵ People from the III and the IV classes lived in another difficult situation. Many of them had enough to live with dignity, but at the same time, they seemed to feel more than others the distance between status and modest financial means. This stirred up their desire for improving their financial condition.

123 Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), pp. 131–75. The description made by McKeon recalls in part that made by Peter Brooks when describing the mechanism in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, an evidence of how the shift 'from status to class' represents a very long process. Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 62–89.

124 Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, pp. 340–55.

125 Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, p. 341.

It was a problem that young aristocrats faced at the beginning of their career. For reasons of status, Venetian laws forbade them many career paths. In particular, young noblemen could not undertake any ‘arte meccanica’,¹²⁶ including trade. The career of D’Arville as Signor Ricciard is a perfect example of what a young nobleman with modest financial means could do. Ricciard begins his career with a position of service – usually reserved to lower rank aristocrats – in a house of the highest aristocracy. Such roles did not exist in Venice, but the fact that Ricciard gets increasingly involved in the politics of the Court (even without her consent), mirrors what was instead typical for aristocrats of intermediate classes: the political career. It was usually carried out either in the lower ranks of the State, in Venice, or overseas, in territories under the Venetian control. The second career of Ricciard is in the army, which was also an available choice for young aristocrats without sufficient financial means.

Significantly, the Count of Terme – a cadet with no family fortune – has exactly the same career. After a long time spent as an officer in the army, he is offered a diplomatic position in Boemia. D’Arville is afraid of the offer: ‘temei subito che fosse ancor egli, come il resto degli uomini; e l’ambizione in lui prevalesses all’amore’¹²⁷. But the Count refuses, and the narrator shows the second aspect of the choice, not related to their love, but to his position:

questo pensiero riguardar mi fece la rinuncia sua come un passo troppo arrischiato, perchè, se gli fosse stata all’orecchio, ne l’avrei sconsigliato. Avrei dato tutto il mio sangue, per annullare il già fatto; e mi sarei contentata, che andasse non solo in Boemia, ma ancora in America; purchè

126 On this prohibition see Anna Bellavitis, ‘Ars mechanica e gerarchie sociali a Venezia tra XVI e XVII secolo’, in *Le technicien dans la cité en Europe occidentale, 1250-1650*, ed. by Mathieu Arnoux and Pierre Monnet (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 2004), pp. 161–79.

127 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 13.

mi restasse la speranza d'esser un giorno sua moglie; e non dovessi mai rimproverare a me stessa la più menoma delle sue imminenti disgrazie.¹²⁸

The ambition of the Count of Terme, as well as that of Signor Ricciard/Madamigella D'Arville, recalls that of young aristocrats who faced the contradiction between what was requisite to their status, and the fact that individual merit alone could not be enough to make one's own fortune. As the narrator writes: 'nel mondo ci vuol più fortuna, che merito'.¹²⁹ Individual qualities were not enough to secure a brilliant career, which needed, first and foremost, money. The difficult relation between rights of birth and individual qualities was of course a theme frequently discussed by European intellectuals during the century. Chiari's novel recalls the traditional debate about the nature and extent of nobility, which found new life among enlightened authors. For example, the term 'Naissance' in D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* asserts:

En voyant le jour ils entrent en possession des honneurs : les grands emplois, les dignités, le maniement des affaires, le commandement des armées, tombent naturellement dans leurs mains. De quoi peuvent-ils se plaindre que d'eux-mêmes, quand l'envie & la malignité les attaquent? Sans doute, qu'alors ils ne sont pas faits pour leur place, quoique la place semblât faite pour eux.¹³⁰

Among the III class of aristocracy, and partly the IV, the contradiction was the main cause of a surplus of ambition:

Dal punto di vista della loro situazione economica, relativamente sicura [...] e ancor più da quello del loro impegno politico superiore alla media e della stima di cui generalmente godevano, i mezzani appartenevano all'élite patrizia; d'altro canto, però, diversamente dai grandi, nessun abisso

128 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 15–16.

129 Chiari, *La filosofessa*, III, 29.

130 *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, ed by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert; [online] University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 Edition), ed. by Robert Morrissey, < <http://encyclopedia.uchicago.edu/> > [accessed 20 June 2014].

incolicabile li separava dai patrizi poveri. [...] anche i membri della classe IV, che tuttavia non erano separati dall'élite patrizia tanto quanto i membri dell'ultima classe, quelli che 'non hanno niente'.¹³¹

Aristocrats from these classes were also more disposed to be influenced by reformist ideas: several attempts at political change in the second half of the century came from young aristocrats from the III class.¹³²

Although people from the 'classe mezzana' were ambitious, they were not the only ones. Chiari's novel represents tensions and conflicts emerging in society, not only in Venice, but Europe. Fundamental changes in society, culture and economy affected Europe in its entirety and would eventually lead to the crisis of the *Ancien Régime* at the end of the century. The novel however has the ability to represent the reflections of such changes in the Venetian environment, and its readers.

Even from this perspective, the centrality of education in the novel is not fortuitous. Education and disobedience represented the best way to deal with social and historical tensions that affected readers. Education also gave the opportunity to recommend possible solutions to existing conflicts, as the learning path of the protagonist goes alongside the learning path of readers. This relationship with readers – by the didactical purposes of novels – will be further exploited by future authors. Other novels may approach education differently, and the characters' disobedience will carry their path in different directions. D'Arville's first step out of her boarding school though, was extremely important for the long disobedient journey of Venetian novels in following years.

¹³¹ Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, p. 192.

¹³² Andrea Memmo and his circle is a case in point: see Gianfranco Torcellan, *Una figura della Venezia settecentesca: Andrea Memmo. Ricerche sulla crisi dell'aristocrazia veneziana* (Venice-Rome: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1963); Susanna Pasquali, 'Andrea Memmo', *DBI*, 73 (2009), <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/andrea-memmo_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/andrea-memmo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) [accessed 2 June 2013].

4. A killer's path to obedience:

Antonio Piazza's *L'omicida irrepreensibile*

When *L'omicida irrepreensibile, ovvero le funeste avventure del Sig. di T. scritte da lui medesimo* was published between 1762 and 1763,¹ its author, Antonio Piazza, was totally unknown to the public of the city. The novelist made this clear when introducing the novel to its readers, presenting himself as an almost uncultured, very young writer, whose main inspiration came from the author of *La filosofessa italiana*.² Chiari is then mentioned explicitly in the first chapter by the narrator, who declares he has studied the abbot's novels as a model for his own text.³ Not only does he divide the text in the same way; he also confesses he has studied Chiari's novels so much that he might even copy them without knowing:

ed essendo io, per dono del Cielo, arricchito d'una memoria felicissima, anche senz'accorgermi impressi mi rimasero nella stessa non solo alcuni tratti di penna, ma de' Capitoli interi, e degl'Atti interi delle sue Commedie eziandio, talchè impossibile mi sembra di poter non inserire involontariamente in quest'Opera mia delle sentenze, delle frasi, e forse ancora de' periodi scritti da lui.⁴

1 The two volumes of the novel were recorded in the *Mandati* books by bookseller Antonio de Castro within four months of each other (the first in December 1762, the second in April 1763). See ASV, *Arti*, 341: n. 749, 9 December 1762 (first volume); n. 869, 11 April 1763 (second volume), *revisore* Baroni. Piazza was also able to get his novel advertised in one of the last issues of the *Gazzetta Veneta*, in September: *Gazzetta Veneta*, n. 51, 18 September 1762.

2 'L'imitazione dello stile che mi dò l'onore di seguire, gloriosamente adoprato da quel celebre Poeta di cui ne farà menzione il Capitolo Primo', Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, p. [x].

3 Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 5.

4 'Nella distribuzione di questa Opera mia mi servirono di norma i Romanzi del celebre Autore della Filosofessa Italiana dividendola in Parti, e suddividendola in Capitoli col loro argomento in

L'omicida irreprensibile offers a good perspective from which to observe continuities and differences between Chiari and Piazza, especially concerning education and disobedience in their novels. Piazza's deployment of racier themes and situations is already present in this novel, introducing a practice which will become typical in his later works. To give just one example, the level of violence both endured and inflicted by the protagonist and other characters is greater than in Chiari's *Filosofessa*. Furthermore, a male protagonist allows Piazza to display behaviours that would have been unacceptable for the corresponding female character. Two illegitimate sexual encounters happen involving the protagonist during the novel: for a female protagonist (especially an aristocrat) like Madamigella D'Arville, this would have been impossible.

From the perspective of didacticism, education and disobedience, Chiari's and Piazza's novels have both differences and common features. On the one hand, it is possible to find similarities in what causes disobedient choices, and in the formative path undertaken by protagonists, which results in them individually maturing and becoming adults. On the other hand, didactic elements in Piazza's first novel are often much more evident and frequent than in Chiari's one. Didacticism is often performed through the use of classical and historical quotations, which are then pedantically explained and related to the narrative itself. This practice differentiates *L'omicida* from *La filosofessa*, but at the same time recalls Chiari's *Gazzetta veneta*: edited by the abbot only a year before the publication of Piazza's novel.

Morace points out the negative reception of this novel by literary scholars,⁵ but at the same time the significant presence of elements which will become typical of Piazza's narratives in the following years. In this sense, it is interesting to compare

fronte, come disposti sono i suddetti', Piazza, *L'omicida irreprensibile*, I, 5. Aldo Maria Morace has identified several elements of 'filiazione' which are 'numerosi e strutturalmente forti', either related to style or content. Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, pp. 27–28.

5 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 21.

the development of the novel, and of its characters, with that of *La filosofessa*, which (as Piazza's acknowledgement underlines) represented a model for the new author. The narrative is entirely centred on its young male protagonist, who is referred to only by initials (*Sig. di T.*). His adventures are told in the first person. There is a subtle correspondence between the narrator of the novel, and the author: they are both writing and publishing for the first time, and both have been encouraged in doing so by the support of an anonymous person of high rank.⁶ As already mentioned, the structure is similar to Chiari's novels, consisting of sections of ten chapters.

The protagonist belongs to a rich Milan family. In an echo of *La filosofessa italiana*, in Piazza's novel the early years of the protagonist are characterised by examples of bad parenting and education. He grows up spoiled, and soon – encouraged by an avid reading of *letteratura amena* – nourishes an unquenchable desire to travel. With the help of his ruthless tutor Anselmo, he attempts to cheat his father, and leaves home when discovered.

While leaving home, he inadvertently kills an old friend of his father – the first of several unintentional killings or manslaughters in the novel; the theme which inspires its title. It might be tempting to associate these killings with the pre-Gothic tone which will be typical of Piazza's later works. However, the protagonist's accidental murders are never accompanied by any emotional involvement on his behalf. On some occasions they are used as a comic parenthesis (as in the first killing). Otherwise, they are (fairly) simple narrative devices that create or eliminate

6 The novel displays several references to an anonymous and generous protector, who had been first to encourage the author to publish his work (probably corresponding to the dedicatee of the novel, Giovanni Battista Semenzi). Giovanni Battista Semenzi was a Venetian nobleman. On the history of this family, accepted into Venetian aristocracy only in the seventeenth century, see Giuseppe Tassini, *Curiosità veneziane, ovvero origini delle denominazioni stradali di Venezia*, 2 vols (Venice: Filippi, 2009), II, 637–38. See also Francesco Schröder, *Repertorio genealogico delle famiglie confermate nobili e dei titolati nobili esistenti nelle provincie venete* (Venice: Alvisopoli, 1830), pp. 269–70. Giacomo Nani located the family Semenzi Premuda in the fourth class of aristocrats, among those who had just enough money to live with dignity. See the extremely useful list of aristocratic families and their position within Nani's five classes made by Jan-Christoph Rößler: 'Klassen Des Venezianischen Patriziats' <<http://venedig.jc-r.net/nani-classe.htm>> [accessed 25 June 2014]. See also Volker Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*.

obstacles in front of the protagonist. The theme of accidental, blameless killings is however inspired by a tale from *One thousand and one nights*; evidence of the many references to novels and other books of *letteratura amena* in the novel, discussed later in this chapter.

After killing a young man during a fight, the protagonist leaves Lombardy, moving south, first to Naples and then to Calabria and Basilicata. This second victim unfortunately proves to be the son of a very powerful man in Milan, a fact that puts the protagonist in a dangerous position, and makes his return to the city unlikely. From this point on, the protagonist's actions are complicated by his fear of being identified by agents or friends of his enemy.

Travelling through Calabria, he arrives in the city of Cirenza, where he is hosted by a generous Marquis, Onorio Encherdi, and meets his daughter, Eleonora. Although already engaged to a French man, soon Eleonora falls in love with the protagonist. In a pathetic scene, she declares her love in front of her father, fiancé, and the bewildered protagonist, until that moment unaware of her feelings. From this first scene, the figure of Eleonora emerges as stronger and more determined than the protagonist. She has courage to the point of recklessness, contrary to the hesitant attitude of her lover.⁷

Eleonora's rejected fiancé sets up a complex plot against her and the protagonist. This is one of several complicated plots which emerge during the novel. In all these schemes presented in the novel, victims get duped because of their excessive trust in people who do not deserve it. As examples of misplaced loyalty, they also can be seen as examples of mistakes not to be repeated, addressed to the reader.

7 'Eleonora è risoluta nelle scelte e rapida nell'elaborazione delle strategie, che tentano di contrastare la potenza della sorte: ad esse il protagonista s'affida, mostrando una dipendenza caratteriale destinata a interessanti sviluppi', Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 29.

In the proceedings, the protagonist inadvertently kills Eleonora's father, the Marquis. Fleeing from the scene, he is caught by a group of outlaws, and in their cave meets Eleonora again. After a dramatic and bloody fight among the bandits, he successfully sets himself free (although he leaves without knowing where Eleonora is) and arrives in a small town nearby. The long outlaws episode is an extended elaboration of a chapter from the European best-seller *Gil Blas de Santillane* by Alain-René Lesage.

Our hero is then rescued by a young nobleman. The protagonist soon discovers that his protector's father is the cousin of the murdered Marquis, and shortly afterwards it is discovered that Sig. di T. is the killer of their relative. The situation is complicated by the arrival of Eleonora, and the reappearance of the protagonist's wicked old tutor, Anselmo. Meeting him also results in another complicated plot, organised by the protagonist to kidnap Eleonora and flee to Venice with her. The development and conclusion of this scheme is a turning point of the narrative, as well as the final act of his disobedient behaviour.

While waiting for Anselmo to return with Eleonora, the protagonist accidentally saves his own father from three assassins, and is then told by her cousin that Eleonora has died while attempting to escape. After an unsuccessful attempt to kill himself, the protagonist returns to Milan, where he meets a mysterious widow, Madama Fauréne. The two establish a relationship, and arrangements are made for a marriage. Although he tries to resist and delay, the relationship results in her becoming pregnant. Just before the wedding, she is poisoned to death after eating a cake sent for the protagonist and his father. Investigations lead to an Englishman, and to the Count of S.S., the powerful father of the protagonist's second victim.

During a short visit to Livorno, the protagonist becomes a murderer for the last time. His victim is an unknown man who attacks him for no apparent reason on the

street. Seeking refuge after the fight, he steps into a rich palace where he finds Eleonora, who he had believed dead, and discovers that the killed man was none other but Eleonora's husband. She hides him from his persecutors, and when he leaves for Milan, she promises to join him there very soon. Finally reunited, and while organising their marriage, the couple is hit by a final terrible discovery: the widow with whom the protagonist had an affair was actually Eleonora's mother. Abandoning the idea of getting married, the two decide to live together in a platonic relationship as brother and sister.

Morace indicates several literary influences for the novel: the Latin author most quoted by Piazza is Juvenal; and the scholar found also words and expressions recalling the work of Dante, Tasso and Parini,⁸ Metastasio and Goldoni. But an important stream of influence can be found among works of contemporary *letteratura amena*: oriental tales and eighteenth century European novels, among others. The novel establishes a complex network of intertextual references in particular with three well known works: Lesage's *Gil Blas de Santillane*, *One thousand and one nights*, and a comedy by Pietro Chiari, *Il buon padre di famiglia* (1752).

As already mentioned, the episode of the outlaws' cave at the end of the first volume is an elaboration of a chapter in the first volume of Lesage's *Gil Blas*. The story is relocated to the region of Calabria, and simplified. However, the main elements remain: the meeting of a group of outlaws in the wood, the political discourse made by one of them to convince the protagonist to join them, the presence of a woman – Eleonora, his lover – kept in the cave, and a successful flight afterwards. Le Sage's novel had several reprints and was one of the most famous and influential European novels of the eighteenth century. In Venice, Lesage's novel had

8 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 26.

a particular resonance. Whilst its Italian translation had been published there twenty years before,⁹ an episode of the novel – a fight between a cat and a dog – had been used by Chiari in *Il buon padre di famiglia*, a comedy staged during one of the most heated moments in their theatre war, in 1752.¹⁰

Interestingly, the relationship between *L'omicida* and this comedy by Chiari is also a complex one, and some of the main themes in Chiari's play are clearly reflected in the novel. There is a disobedient child and a malicious servant who helps him, with the pairing Lucindo-Truffaldino in the play mirrored by that of 'l'omicida'-Anselmo in the novel. In the first scene, the young master and his servant discuss a way to steal money from relatives,¹¹ which is exactly what Anselmo and his pupil do at the beginning of the novel. In Chiari's comedy, Lucindo also has an affair with the daughter of a plebeian man, Brighella, who encourages their relationship for financial gain.¹²

A significant similarity lies also in the causes of the disobedient behaviour of the son. In the comedy this behaviour is caused by the excessive love and protection of a mother: 'ecco dove mi ha condotto una amorosa passione in me fomentata dalla tenerezza soverchia di una madre troppo pietosa', exclaims Lucindo on discovering

9 Alain-René Lesage, *Gil Blas di Santillano, storia galante tratta dall'idioma francese nell'italiano dal dottor D. Giulio Monti*, 7 vols (Venice: Bortoli, 1735–67). Bortoli continued to publish new editions of this novel: a sixth edition was produced in 1767. In 1751 the same entrepreneur recorded a *mandato* for the publication of the sequel: *Vita di Don Alfonso Blas di Lirias*. However, the first copy recorded in the national OPAC for this book (still published by Bortoli) dates from 1759. Evidence of the currency of Lesage's novel is again linked to the theatrical world: in a famous pamphlet written by Carlo Gozzi in 1761, Goldoni and Chiari were nicknamed after the poet *Nuñez*, a character from the first book of Lesage's novel. Carlo Gozzi, *Fogli sopra alcune massime del Genio e costumi del secolo dell'abate Pietro Chiari e contro a' poeti Nugnez de' nostri tempi* (Venice: Colombani, 1761); Gerard Luciani, 'Un écho de Gil Blas à Venise au XVIIIe siècle', in *Lectures du Gil Blas de Lesage*, ed. by Jacques Wagner (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2003), pp. 191–202.

10 The comedy was printed in Pietro Chiari, *Commedie rappresentate*, 1, 97–188. It was a direct response to Goldoni's *il padre di famiglia* staged in the same year. Chiari also used an episode from the *Gil Blas* for the comedy 'I nemici del pane che mangiano', staged in the same year. Sommi-Picenardi, *Un rivale del Goldoni*, pp. 10–14; Giuseppe Ortolani, *Settecento*, pp. 445–48; For a summary of translated novels adapted to plays by Goldoni and Chiari, see Armando Marchi, 'Il mercato dell'immaginario', in *Pietro Chiari e il teatro europeo del Settecento*, ed. by Carmelo Alberti (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1986), pp. 77–114.

11 Pietro Chiari, *Il buon padre di famiglia*, 1.1.

12 Pietro Chiari, *Il buon padre di famiglia*, 1.1.

that his father is punishing him by sending him to Moscovia.¹³ The narrator of *L'omicida* reflects on his early mistakes with very similar words:

se nell'età nostra giovanile non lasciassero i nostri Padri impunte le prime colpe figliali per soverchia affezione e per femminile pietade [...] non giungeremmo noi con tanta facilità [...] ad essere disamorati di loro, e scapestrati cotanto sino a scordare talvolta le leggi più venerabili della Natura e del Sangue.¹⁴

Even more complex, involving the entire narrative of *L'omicida* both structurally and thematically, is the relation established with *One thousand and one nights*. This oriental tale, in the version translated and edited by Antoine Galland, had been published for the first time in Venice in 1721,¹⁵ followed by other editions and several reprints.¹⁶

The main inspiration for Piazza's novel comes from the *Hunchback's Tale*,¹⁷ a story belonging to the original versions of the collection which, translated by Galland, passed into the Italian translation.¹⁸ It is a multi-layered narrative which contains twelve tales in itself. The first one is the tale of the hunchback's accidental death by choking. The person who invited him to dinner, afraid of consequences of the death, moves the body into somebody else's house. From this point on, every person stumbling on the hunchback's body is tricked into believing that they have killed him. The first killing in *L'omicida irrepreensibile* mirrors the first incident of the series, which occurred to a Jewish doctor. The same action (opening the door violently)

13 *Il buon padre di famiglia*, III.6.

14 Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 32.

15 *Novelle arabe divise in mille ed una notte. Tradotte dall'idioma francese nel volgare italiano*, 12 vols (Venice: Coleti, 1721–22). See also Marina Formica, *Lo specchio turco: immagini dell'altro e riflessi del sé nella cultura italiana d'età moderna* (Rome: Donzelli, 2012), pp. 134–35.

16 The same publisher of Galland's edition, Sebastiano Coleti, was also responsible for the publication of another version of the tale, the *Mille ed un quarto d'ora: novelle tartare* (Venice: Coleti, 1723), translated from the version edited by Thomas-Simon Gueullette. On the French tradition of the Oriental tale, and the different eighteenth-century editions, see Jean François Perrin, 'L'invention d'un genre littéraire au xviiiè siècle', *Féeries*, 2 (2005), 9–27.

17 The tale is contained in the fourth volume of Coleti's edition of *Novelle arabe* (1721).

18 See Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen, *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, 2 vols (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), I, 224–25.

causes the same effect.¹⁹ On the most basic level, thus, the theme of blameless murder is based on this story. But the novel seems to have also a deeper relation with the oriental tale. When the body of the hunchback is finally discovered, all the people who had dealt with the body accuse themselves of the murder.²⁰ This triggers a second narrative level, with tales told by each one of them in front of the Sultan. Piazza's novel also relates to this second level. In the tale told by the Jewish doctor,²¹ a man wakes up in the morning after sleeping with a beautiful mysterious woman, only to find her dead. He decides to hide her body, burying it in the backyard, and then leave the city. However, he keeps her necklace, and after many years, when he returns to the city, he is finally recognised and accused of the murder because of that. Piazza mirrors this element in the second murder of *L'omicida*: the protagonist keeps for himself the belongings of his victim, an act for which he will pay later:

Tanto m'invaghì della medesima [a snuffbox], che feci in cambio colla mia.
[...] la vaghezza mia giovanile considerar non lasciavami la differenza, e mi
dipingeva come perdonabile e leggiero il delitto.²²

Other similarities can be found in the 'poisoning garlic' of the Reeve's tale. It is a long, complicated tale involving cumin seeds (in the Venetian version domesticated as garlic) which through a series of unfortunate coincidences cause a man to almost kill his new wife. Although the food in itself is not poisonous, the story reverberates in the death (by true poison this time) of the novel's protagonist's fiancé, Madama Fauréne.²³

Apart from these similarities, however, what is more striking is the fact that the majority of the stories contained in the Hunchback's tale involve young protagonists

19 The intertextual relationship is further developed by Piazza: the person murdered by the protagonist is an old doctor. Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 31.

20 *Novelle arabe*, IV, 47–59.

21 *Novelle arabe*, IV, 120–45.

22 Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 67.

23 Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, II, 200–203.

who learn – usually the hard way – how to deal with the difficult situations of their lives. Furthermore, most of these tales describe experiences which happened to protagonists in their early years of independence, after they have left parental home and supervision to find their way in the world.

Not surprisingly, this is also the main theme of Lesage's *Gil Blas*, which is a novel of education – one of the first of the eighteenth-century, and certainly one of the most famous and successful. The web of inter-textual relationships in Piazza's novel is constructed not simply by recalling famous or recognisable passages, but by referring to texts whose main issues are the education of young people and the risks of the world for the inexperienced.

This also sheds a different light on Piazza's work as a novelist. The complex interplay established with *Gil Blas*, the *Hunchback's Tale* or *Il buon padre di famiglia*, suggests that Piazza is more than an under-schooled writer (as he presents himself in the *avviso* of the first volume) awkwardly using trite narrative devices. He is, rather, an author who knowingly plays with the vast corpus of *letteratura amena*, and with the reader. Scholars have criticised the presence of classical and canonical authors in Piazza's novels, blaming him for losing his way among over-lofty heights of great literature. His use of overtly elaborated expressions seems to involuntarily mock much more sophisticated authors and genres.²⁴ But looking at intertextual references (which, as will be discussed in the following paragraphs, are related to specific functions of the novel) this may be a mis-interpretation.

From this perspective, the *captatio benevolentiae* made by Piazza introducing the novel and in the first chapter, is misleading. Piazza offers a self-portrait of the

24 'Sin dalle prime pagine emerge un esempio di sintassi faticosa, involuta: uno dei momenti in cui la ricerca dell'elaboratezza formale fa slittare rovinosamente la prosa piazziana, nella quale [...] agisce l'eredità della tradizione illustre, cui egli non poteva e non sapeva rinunciare', Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 22. Other negative judgements about Piazza's prose in this novel include those by Marchesi, *Studi e ricerche*, p. 145, and Edoardo Villa, *Il sogno di Pigmalione: note di narrativa* (Genoa: Brigati, 1998), pp. 41–42.

young novelist as an ingenious and naïve author. But the intertextual net hidden in the text proves that the allegation is false. When the narrator says there is a risk of him quoting Chiari's works without being aware of it for instance, he is not excusing himself for unwanted plagiarism, but rather inviting the reader to recognise hidden references. And the obvious tracing of Lesage's story of outlaws imbues with subtle irony the sentence in the prefatory *avviso*: 'l'invenzione, l'intreccio, e la tessitura delle presenti avventure, riconoscono la loro origine dalla sola mia fantasia, nè sono una imitazione dell'altrui fatiche che sarebbe incomportabile'.²⁵

Thus, despite the weaknesses highlighted by critics in his debut novel, Piazza shows a deep knowledge of *letteratura amena*, consciously used for establishing and reinforcing the relationship with his readers. He also borrows narrative devices typical of these texts, which help him to capture audience attention. This is particularly evident at the end of the first volume, in which the author interrupts the narrative when the group of outlaws is attempting to rape Eleonora. The reader has to wait until the publication of the second volume to know Eleonora's fate. In this sense, the *avviso* published in the second volume, in which Piazza begs forgiveness to his public for its late publication, sounds more sincere than usual: the narrative had been closed abruptly, and there was no sign of a 'temporary' ending in the final chapter or elsewhere. From this perspective, Piazza's novel is different from *La filosofessa*.

Piazza's use of these narrative devices might lead to the hypothesis that this author – unlike Chiari – preferred the entertaining side of the novel, while downplaying the didactic side. Direct references to the latter found in Chiari's novels and Pasinelli's paratexts, for instance, are not to be found in *L'omicida*. As shown in the case of *the Hunchback's Tale* however, Piazza tended to deal with the novel's didacticism indirectly, rather than explicitly.

25 Piazza, *L'omicida irreprensibile*, I, p. [x]

Didacticism and the novel

It is interesting to compare how the two authors deal with didacticism. The main issue is to understand *how* different authors dealt with this aspect of their novels. In fact, although he does not express this function openly, several aspects of Piazza's novel are closely related to its didactic aim.

As Morace observed, the prose of *l'omicida* is characterised by frequent reference to the literary tradition:

la prosa piazziana s'intarsia di echi e di rimandi letterari e di citazioni dotte (ancorché enciclopediche ed ostentate con ingenuo compiacimento), che sono attinte dal patrimonio mitologico e classico. [...] Unitamente ad un florilegio di *exempla* tratti dalla storia greca e romana, esse vengono riversate soprattutto negli ampi prologhi ai capitoli e nei momenti digressivi e commentativi.²⁶

An interesting feature of these quotations is precisely their encyclopedism, related to their position inside the text. Rather than representing a simplistic use of a limited grasp of wider cultural matters, it might be worth considering the presence of these quotations as a didactic tool. Among others, some elements typical of didactic literature are used by Piazza in the novel: *exempla*,²⁷ anecdotes, maxims, and precepts. Anecdotes belong to the more informative function of didacticism, which can include historical or geographical information. Precepts, maxims and *exempla* belong rather to the moral and behavioural side of didacticism: precepts present the

26 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, pp. 26–27.

27 The word *exemplum* in Medieval literature 'indica, per mezzo di un aneddoto, quale deve essere il comportamento quotidiano dei fedeli', Roberto Rusconi, *Predicazione e vita religiosa nella società italiana da Carlo Magno alla Controriforma* (Turin: Loescher, 1981), p. 138. Carlo Delcorno highlights its explicative function: 'un breve racconto che illustra e prova un principio morale, un concetto: una illustrative story'. Carlo Delcorno, *La predicazione nell'età comunale* (Florence: Sansoni, 1974), pp. 19–20. Both definition are quoted in Giuseppe Orlandi, 'L'uso degli *exempla* in S. Alfonso Maria de Liguori. Note di storia della letteratura religiosa dell'età moderna', *Spicilegium Historicum*, 39 (1991), 3–39 (p. 8). Although the novelist's intentions are not strictly religious, still this term remains the best way to indicate the exemplary tales and short stories present in the novel.

rules to be followed directly (through a list of rules and prohibitions), *exempla* show directly a virtuous or wicked behaviour, and its consequences. Maxims stand somehow in the middle between an informative and an instructive function. It is not always possible to distinguish between these three elements, as sometimes *exempla* and anecdotes correspond. Often they do not stand alone, but are employed together to mobilise the meaning more effectively.

Exempla, precepts, maxims and anecdotes all derive from a long tradition of didactic literature which was still widely known in the eighteenth century in many forms. The most widely recognisable, however, were traditional conduct books of religious inspiration, and ‘modern’ pedagogical works of different genres, such as letters, essays and novels. These were mostly books by French authors published from the end of the seventeenth century onwards. The most influential work of this second group is certainly the novel *Les adventures de Télémaque* by Fénelon: a novel written with explicit pedagogical purposes. A similar influence probably came from books by authors such as Morvan de Bellegarde’s *Riflessioni critiche sui costumi ridicoli*²⁸ or *Regole della vita civile*.

It is useful to compare the use made of *exempla* and precepts in traditional conduct books with those in modern didactic works, to see what elements were passed on to Piazza’s novel. *Il giovanetto Giuseppe*²⁹ is a good example of the first group. It was written by Giovanni Calino (or Calini), a religious person who taught in a *seminaria nobilem*, a boarding school for young aristocrats, in Bologna.³⁰ Calini’s

28 Louis Morvan de Bellegarde, *Riflessioni critiche sopra li costumi ridicoli introdotti in questo secolo nella civile societa. Opera del sig. abate di Bellagarde divisa in due tomi, tradotta in lingua italiana dalla nona edizione francese*, 2 vols (Venice: Pasinelli, 1744–45).

29 Cesare Calini, *Il giovanetto Giuseppe proposto a’ giovanetti studiosi. Discorsi* (Bologna: Pisarri 1720). Significantly, later editions of the book are all published in Venice: 1721, 1752, 1794, 1816. All quotations are from a 1752 edition: *Il giovanetto Giuseppe proposto a’ giovanetti studiosi* (Venice: Recurti, 1752).

30 Calini was a prolific writer of conduct and moral literature. See Giuseppe Pignatelli, ‘Calini, Cesare’, *DBI*, 16 (1973) <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/cesare-calini_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/cesare-calini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)> [Accessed 12 January 2014].

book, a collection of *discorsi* inspired by the biblical story of Joseph, the son of Jacob, was reprinted several times during the century.³¹ The book's purpose is to teach young pupils to behave properly, by showing them the virtuous example of the young Joseph.³² Consequently, the author addresses his young audience directly. The introduction however is aimed at their parents, explaining to them how the system of examples and explanations should be used.

Per modo di esempio avendo letto il primo discorso, sù figlio, dovreste dire a suo tempo, Dio vuole, che tu adesso studj; perché studierai? Sù, di ben a Dio: mia Madre vuole, che adesso io studj; e voi lo volete; Signore, voglio studiare per piacer a voi. Altra volta esso non v'ha ubbidito, collo stesso primo discorso, vien quà, potreste dirgli; chi era quello, che portava l'acqua, anco quando gli comandavano, che portasse fuoco; e voleva far a suo modo, chi era? [...] Credetemi; se con proporzione alla loro età anderete così ripetendo i documenti all'orecchio, vedrete sensibilissimo il profitto del loro spirito.³³

Calini's book exemplifies the most straightforward use of examples and precepts in didactic texts: the narration of an event or behaviour in the life of the protagonist is immediately followed by its explanation, and in each case accompanied by a precept, or a maxim.

As one example, the second *discorso* describes the life of Giuseppe and his brothers. They were all children of Jacob, but had different mothers, both aristocrat and plebeian women. Although his mother, Rachel, was among the former, 'donna delle più nobili, e riguardevoli',³⁴ Giuseppe treated all his brothers with equal respect. This description is immediately followed by the comment about the meaning of the example: 'ammaestrando a voi tutti, che la nobiltà, ed altre vostre naturali

31 The text was used, among others, in Jesuit's *collegia nobilium* for teaching manners and proper social behaviour. See Brizzi, *La formazione della classe dirigente*, pp. 225–27.

32 'Pertanto propongo io a' Giovani Cavalieri gli esempj, e i successi di un Giovane Cavaliere. Prego lo Spirito Santo, che li dettò nel sacro Genesi per nostra idea, a fare che vi si impriman nel cuore a vostra salute', Calini, *Il giovanetto Giuseppe*, p. 2.

33 Calini, *Il giovanetto Giuseppe*, p. [iii].

34 Calini, *Il giovanetto Giuseppe*, pp. 20–21.

prerogative, non anno ad essere origine di superbia per voi, o di disprezzo per gli altri'.³⁵ Furthermore, the author-teacher adds a more general observation:

quest'è un pericolo, che corrono i Giovani nobili ne' Seminarj, e Collegj: non già perchè la loro educazione possa influire a tai sentimenti; ma perchè trattando solamente tra loro, facilmente si lavorano, e fermentano certa idea di alterigia, che si deve detestare da ogni nobile di mediocre saviezza.³⁶

In Piazza's book the association of example and maxim is frequent. For example, at the beginning of the novel the protagonist cannot sleep because of guilt-feelings for having deceived his father, as 'mi tennero desto mille funesti pensieri, ed un continuo rammarico'.³⁷ This is immediately followed by a maxim:

La Gioventù per lo più è prontissima a desiderare quello eziandio che desiderar lecitamente non si può, e ad onta degl'altrui più maturi consigli cerca le più agevoli strade d'ottenere ciò che più agogna.³⁸

A similar use of examples, maxims and precepts is also common in conduct books of a different kind to Calini's *Giovanetto*, which had similar success in Venice, especially among the public of *letteratura amena*.

Bellegarde's *Riflessioni critiche* is a case in point. It was translated by Giuseppe Costantini, and published by Pasinelli in 1744, when the success of *Lettere critiche* was reaching its peak. *Riflessioni* are structured in chapters dedicated to different character weaknesses (among others: 'ruvidezza, inconsideratezza, affettazione, vanagloria, cattivo gusto, impostura, o finzione, presunzione, albagia, stravaganza').³⁹ Chapters are introduced here by a maxim, followed by an extensive explanation, accompanied by examples. The protagonists of these exemplary actions are anonymous people, called familiarly only by their own name: 'Allorchè Baldo vi

35 Calini, *Il giovanetto Giuseppe*, p. 21.

36 Calini, *Il giovanetto Giuseppe*, p. 21.

37 Piazza, *L'omicida irreprensibile*, I, p. 21.

38 Piazza, *L'omicida irreprensibile*, I, p. 21.

39 Bellegarde, *Riflessioni critiche*, I, p. [viii].

viene a rendere la visita, ei comincia la conversazione fino dall'Anticamera; parla alto, e sempre d'un tuono, punto non si mettendo in pena di essere ascoltato; basta ch'ei parli'.⁴⁰

In another famous work by Bellegarde, *Les Règles de la vie civile, avec des traits d'histoire pour former l'esprit d'un jeune prince*, precepts addressed to the reader are accompanied by *exempla* taken from mythology and recent and past history. Although the Venetian edition of *Les Règles* appeared only in 1769⁴¹ its structure recalls that of similar books circulating in those decades. The book is addressed to a prince, similarly to Fenelon's *Télémaque*, and the *exempla* concern people such as Henry IV, Seneca, Louis XII, Ferdinand d'Aragon, etc. Similarly, in Piazza's novel, chapters are often introduced with a passage in which a classical or mythological example is referenced in relation to the plot.

For example, in the ninth chapter of the first volume Piazza narrates an episode from the life of Alexander the Great: while entering Babylon, the great king had ignored the inauspicious sign of a group of black crows, as well as the subsequent interpretation of his soothsayers who predicted bad luck for him. 'Avverandosi i presagi', Alexander died in Babylon. The following sentence recalls the narrative at the point in which it had been left in the previous chapter: the enemy of the protagonist had found a dead bird: 'quel misero augelletto che a' piedi del povero Rivale mio morì, predisse colla sua la di lui morte'.⁴²

The influence of these and similar works on Venetian *letteratura amena* was deep, and involved different genres. In the 1740s, Bellegarde's *Riflessioni* was a reference point for successful books of letters. Costantini's *Lettere critiche* and

40 Bellegarde, *Riflessioni critiche*, I, p. 12.

41 Jean Baptiste Morvan de Bellegarde, *Regole della vita civile illustrate con diversi fatti storici per ammaestramento delle persone di qualità dell'abate di Bellegarde* (Venice: Giammaria Bassaglia, 1769). The book was published in France for the first time in 1693.

42 Piazza, *L'omicida irreprensibile*, I, 64–65.

Chiari's *Lettere scelte* made much use of quotations, and were also thematically similar to Bellegarde's *Riflessioni*, which centred on the cultural and social life of elites, as *Lettere* seemed mostly to do.⁴³

This influence continued in following years. The use of examples, anecdotes, and maxims is extremely common in Chiari's *La gazzetta veneta*, which the abbot edited during 1761. In the periodical, 'encyclopedic' and erudite examples taken from history and literature are accompanied by anecdotes and stories taken from the life of the city. The quotation of *exempla* taken from history or mythology is particularly frequent in the opening article of the *Gazzetta*. A sentence or episode (usually starting with a quotation from Latin or Greek literature) is followed by a moralistic explanation, a maxim, or a precept. These are often linked to news or a discussion related to current events or debates. In the *Gazzetta* n. 3 for instance,⁴⁴ the opening article begins with a quotation in Latin from Ovid, used as an introduction to a self-defence of the journalist addressed to his new audience; in n. 4 the quotation is from Virgil's *Aeneid*, and is used as the start of an article about a theatrical discussion involving Goldoni and the author.⁴⁵ There were also many other combinations. Another article in *Gazzetta* n. 3 includes almost all elements discussed above:

Tutto lo spirito umano ci fa bensì superiori talvolta; ma non ci fa sempre insensibili alle debolezze della natura (1). Visitando l'altro giorno una Donna ben nata di merito grande, e di non mediocre talento, mi toccò di trovarla colle lagrime agli occhi (2) [...] Sovvenendomi allora delle meraviglie che narransi anticamente operata dalla Poesia nella Persona, or d'Ansione, or d'Orfeo, e della forza incredibile che le attribuiscono sopra le passioni e gli affetti del core umano (3), mi cadde subitamente in pensiero di farne una prova.⁴⁶

43 See also Giuseppe Ortolani, *Voci e visioni del Settecento veneziano* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1926), p. 211–212.

44 *Gazzetta veneta*, n. 3, 18 February 1761.

45 *Gazzetta veneta*, n. 4, 21 February 1761.

46 *Gazzetta veneta*, n. 3, 18 February 1761.

The article starts with a maxim (1), and continues with an anecdote from the author's direct experience (2), and a mythological reference (3). Although Piazza is clearly not used to Chiari's level of erudition, the *Gazzetta* offered an example to draw from which was recent, and readers could relate it to a well-known author.

The *fil rouge* running from Calini to Bellegarde shows a direct relationship between the use of *exempla*, anecdotes and precepts in genres with an explicit didactic aim, and novels.⁴⁷ Finally, the main difference between novels and other genres is given by the balance between didacticism and entertainment. One of the main aspects of novels' didacticism is the modification of *exempla*, which are increasingly 'hidden' in the text. It is the kind of exemplarity already seen in *La filosofessa*, who hopes her adventures will be useful to her daughter, and readers. In this sense, her example is also a form of mediated experience. This approach will be typical of Piazza's later novels, while the explicit use of *exempla* tends to disappear. As has been often argued by critics, it is possible that Piazza was driven to privilege narrative elements over non-narrative ones. From another perspective, however, the novel could simply have increasingly absorbed *exempla* into the narrative. At the end of this process, the use of explicit examples became redundant, and was eliminated, while 'implicit' examples – both positive and negative – took their place. A very good example of this mutation is in the novel *I zingani*, which stages two negative *exempla*, and will be analysed in the next chapter.

47 See also Franco Fido, 'Ville parlanti e vite (in)imitabili: risvolti della cultura pedagogica nel Settecento', in *Viaggi in Italia di don Chisciotte*, pp. 211–29 (pp. 211–18).

Disobedience and parental conflict

As in the case of *La filosofessa*, *L'omicida* is a narrative centred on the education of the protagonist. It is an (embryonic) form of *bildungsroman*, with the slow but continual modification of the protagonist's self through a long and difficult learning process. As Morace points out, though, 'l'aspetto più innovativo [...] è dato dalla consistenza del personaggio protagonista, che non prescinde in qualche misura dal tormento del conflitto interiore e da un processo di modificazione evolutiva'.⁴⁸ The psychological development of the narrator, therefore, is not completely linear or complete: internal conflicts remain present almost until the end, and are always difficult to overcome. Thus, the protagonist has 'un io che permane adolescenzialmente irresoluto e perplesso, che non si comprende e che si consegna da vittima agli eventi',⁴⁹ as Morace describes it. On the other hand, the figure of Eleonora emerges as a much stronger character, brave and determined in making her choices. Curiously enough, the final scene of the entire novel shows a *ménage* which seems to contradict Eleonora's attitude during the entire novel. When they are finally living together, she loses all power over her finances (dowry)⁵⁰: 'tra dessa e me non ci sono leggi del tuo e del mio, consegnando ella a me quanti denari le vengono, ed io somministrandole tutto ciò che le aggrada', even though legally this would happen only if the two were married. In this sense, the 'ribaltamento dei ruoli tradizionali' signalled by Morace, is limited to the time of adventure, but difficult to achieve after the final settlement.

The narrative begins with the adolescence of the protagonist, a pattern which is common in autobiographies, and by then also typical of Chiari's novels.⁵¹ As in *La*

48 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 29.

49 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 29.

50 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 29.

51 'Ordinario costume di chiunque scrive la vita sua, è di incominciare da quell'età, in cui fortificandosi l'adolescenza, e balenando l'umana ragione, siamo capaci di ben usare la medesima; non avendo noi degl'anni infantili che un'imperfetta idea che ci fa confondere il vero

filosofessa, the adventures – the education – of the protagonist starts when he leaves puberty. The change is embodied by conflict with a parental figure, which then results in an act of disobedience. The construction of the father's character in the novel moves from the very negative figure depicted in the first part, to an increasingly positive one later on. It is, however, clear that the main reason for the choices made at the beginning of his adventures by the protagonist are the effects of a wrong method of education.

The protagonist is 'di famiglia nobilissima'. Most of their wealth comes from the protagonist's grandfather, who served the State of Milan in 'varj luminosi pubblici impieghi', leaving his son 'titolato, e ricchissimo'.⁵² The son, though, does not follow the same path: satisfied with a rich inheritance, and unwilling to engage himself in a political career, 'pensò di vivere col suo, senza pensieri per alcuno'. As in *La filosofessa*, the choice of living with one's own wealth is not judged negatively *per se*; in fact, the final *ménage* of the protagonist at the end of the novel is very similar to that way of living.⁵³ The main problem is rather *how* his father spends his time and money: 'non pensò mai d'onorare i giorni suoi con qualche virtuosa azione', and he was only interested in 'inezie', 'divertimenti', and 'piaceri'.⁵⁴

As already seen in Chiari's novel, lack of integrity, and the questionable behaviour of parents, are the main causes for the disobedient acts of their children. This negative model of parental education is openly recognised by the narrator: his father failed to educate him 'con quella morigerata condotta che distingue i Genitori da' tiranni'.⁵⁵ The maternal figure in *L'omicida* is extremely weak: although the mother sees the defects in the education of her child, pointing them out to her

con il falso', Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 8.

52 Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 9.

53 This situation can be compared with the positive figure of D'Arcoré in *La filosofessa italiana*. One of the main positive features of the bourgeois d'Arcoré is precisely the fact that he managed his estate as an aristocrat, in a very 'conservative' way.

54 Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 11.

55 Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 11.

husband, he decides to ignore her. This situation mirrors the opposite one of *La filosofessa*, where the figure of the father is almost absent, at least until the final recognition.

Later in the novel, Piazza will explain the disobedient behaviour of the protagonist precisely with the bad education received from his parent ('funestissimi effetti [...] of the 'paterno rigore').⁵⁶ In particular he condemns an excessive severity:

la paterna severità, ed un troppo rigoroso predominio soventi fiate giunga ad esacerbare l'animo d'un Figlio, e possa farlo passare dalla probità e dall'obbedienza alla dissolutezza, ed al vizio [...] i puntigli e i rimproveri, e la barbarie non altro fanno che peggiorare i cattivi e render cattivi i buoni medesimi.⁵⁷

This does not mean that the novel endorses an education which leaves too much freedom to pupils and children, as there are also many examples given of the dangers of lack of control over children. The protagonist's father leaves him (and at some point encourages him) to play cards and stay out at night without control. In the same discussion about education mentioned above, Piazza also attacks the lack of discipline of certain parents. Fathers need rather to be like those doctors 'che pietosamente crudeli penetrano co' ferri loro nelle più delicate, e sensitive parti del corpo umano, e sentir gli fanno mille spasmosi dolori per risanarlo'.⁵⁸

Piazza seems rather to suggest a parenting in which authority is mainly acquired by giving good examples, and by offering clear guidance to children: a parental control that avoids the extremes of liberality and tyranny alike, in other words. The description of good and bad parentage made by Piazza, recalls that given in *Some*

⁵⁶ Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 32.

⁵⁷ Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 32–33.

⁵⁸ Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 34.

Thoughts about Education. On the one hand, Locke criticised parents' excessive permissiveness (such as that shown by the protagonist's mother):

Parent being wisely ordained by nature to love their children, are very apt, if reason watch not that natural affection very warily, are apt, I say, to let it run into fondness. They love their little ones, and 'tis their duty; but they often, with them, cherish their faults too.⁵⁹

But Locke criticised also choices and attitudes similar to those of the protagonist's father:

I desire to know what vice can be named, which parents, and those about children, do not season them with, and drop into them the seeds of, as soon as they are capable to receive them? I do not mean by the examples they give, and the patterns they set before them, which is encouragement enough: but that which I would take notice of here is, the downright teaching them vice, and actual putting them out of the way of virtue.⁶⁰

The dis-educative model embodied by the protagonist's father's behaviour is reinforced by an attitude towards books and reading, the official way of education. His son is an avid reader of *letteratura amena*, and particularly that related to travel. Similarly to *La filosofessa*, the *letteratura amena* represents a library of disobedience for the protagonist. The love for travel born and nourished by his readings – 'Romanzi, Novelle, Dilettevoli storie che desto mi tenevano l'innato mio desiderio'⁶¹ – is the main cause of the first act of disobedience against his father. On the other end, the father is a champion of anti-intellectualism, 'inimico giurato non solo delle applicazioni studiose, ma di quelli eziandio che ad istudiare s'applicavano'.⁶²

This ignorance and rejection of any kind of study has a side effect: his father is extremely credulous. This makes him an ideal victim of 'certe teste sventate, certi

59 John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (London: Tonson, 1779), p. 35.

60 Locke, *Some Thoughts*, p. 38.

61 Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 12.

62 Piazza, *L'omicida irrepreensibile*, I, 11.

apparenti saputi, che gli empievano il capo di chimeriche perniciose idee, e facendolo insuperbire di lui medesimo lo rendevano oggetto de' motteggi delle scienziate assemblee'. The father's credulity is even more dangerous for the family's estate, as:

credulo oltre ogni credere, e dolcissimo di core, aderiva a' prieghi di chi gl'insidiava l'oro suo, nè valeva un'inganno [sic] per renderlo cauto in avvenire, e meno facile a profondere le ricchezze sue in prò degl'altri, e ad esaurire l'eredità al Figlio suo ed a' suoi venturi Nepoti.⁶³

The last sentence is particularly important, for several reasons. On the one hand, it reflects a common preoccupation among aristocratic (and more generally, well off) families, in Venice and elsewhere. As mentioned in *La filosofessa* about marriages, the conservation of the family estate in the Venetian aristocracy was extremely important for the perpetuation of the family's power and status, as well as important for the political stability of the Republic.⁶⁴ Therefore it was an extremely sensitive topic, and certainly many readers would have been familiar with it, from direct or indirect personal experience.

The novel focuses particularly on two ways in which family wealth was endangered: the first one is that of losing money through thoughtless expenditure, often caused by immoral behaviour (for instance: gambling, or spending it with women of doubtful reputation). The second way, which is described and investigated in many forms and at many times in the novel, is that of being exposed to fraud, deceit and confidence tricks. Both ways reflect a common perception of the risks faced by young people. To quote Renata Ago:

Nelle raccomandazioni dei genitori sembra prevalere tutt'altro obiettivo, molto più pratico. L'insistenza con la quale essi esortano i figli adolescenti a vivere ritirati, a non comparire mai in pubblico da soli, a farsi sempre accompagnare da un parente adulto, da un precettore, da un servo fidato,

⁶³ Piazza, *L'omicida irreprensibile*, I, 12.

⁶⁴ Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*; Lanaro, 'Fedecommissi, doti, famigli'.

dimostra quanto temessero il pericolo, molto concreto oltre che morale, di un possibile traviamiento. Il ragazzo poteva associarsi a cattive compagnie, macchiando la reputazione della sua persona e della sua famiglia; poteva perdere al gioco, farsi truffare, o addirittura farsi irretire fino ad accettare un matrimonio clandestino. Gli adolescenti sono infatti moralmente fragili, sempre esposti al rischio di perdersi.⁶⁵

Not surprisingly, then, the first disobedient act of the protagonist is performed as part of a fraud aimed at extorting a large sum of money from his father. The inexperienced young adolescent, however, would have been unable to operate such a trick on his father alone, and he has to be helped by his tutor, Anselmo. Anselmo's figure reinforces the wrong direction of the protagonist's education. The tutor had started his career as a servant, but the credulous father had been taken in by his false erudition, and elevated him to the personal tutor of the protagonist. Anselmo's role can be compared with that of Madamigella d'Arville's headmistress. In both cases, these characters act as figures of authority – mediators of parental authority – who are unworthy of their role. However, while in the case of *La filosofessa* the most untrustworthy act of the headmistress towards d'Arville had been that of not telling the truth, in *L'omicida irrepreensibile* Anselmo's actions are much more extreme.

The first disobedience

When Anselmo discovers his pupil's passion for travel, he offers to help him rob his father of a large sum of *zecchini*, so that he will be able to leave the house, and travel on his own. As already pointed out, the relationship between Anselmo and the protagonist recalls that between Lucindo and Truffaldino in Chiari's comedy 'il buon padre di famiglia'. But contemporary pedagogical treatises and guides all insisted on the dangers of servants' influence in the education of young children. It is enough to see two examples from the anonymous treatise, *L'Educazione delle*

65 Ago, 'Giovani nobili nell'età dell'assolutismo', 392.

fanciulle. Encouraging mothers to breastfeed their children themselves, the author says: ‘colpevole inattenzione di certe Madri, che lasciano in abbandono i loro bambini fra le mani di nutrici ignoranti, e indiscrete, e vili, che operano a vista del guadagno, senza mai, o quasi mai osservare, come li trattano’ (p. xliv). And later, on the risk of children staying at home with servants: ‘[le prime parole] saranno quelle, che più di spesso diconsi da’ Domestici: argomento, che i Bambini nè fanno, nè dicono, se non ciò, che si fa, e si dice da quelli coi quali convivono’.⁶⁶

The deception involves a third person, a Neapolitan man ‘di volgare estrazione ed esausto di soldi’ who ‘per guadagnare venti, o trenta Zecchini capace sarebbe di mettere a soqquadro un’intera famiglia’.⁶⁷ The plot is simple: the young protagonist will tell his father he lost ‘sulla parola’ a thousand *zecchini* with this man, who pretends to be a high ranking nobleman under the name of Count di Brend. Anselmo will be in charge of reassuring the father about the true origins of the Count, testifying that he had already met the Count in Naples, and therefore guaranteeing his reliability.

Anselmo spends many words lecturing the protagonist about how to behave if he is interrogated by his father. He teaches him how to lie, what questions he is likely to have to answer, and what excuses his pupil must offer.⁶⁸ Anselmo’s plot is finally discovered by the father because the protagonist cannot perform his duty as a liar. And the main reason for his failure is that he has not learnt this art yet:

se allora avessi io avuta quell’arte e quella sottigliezza d’ingegno che dappoi acquistai, avrei ben saputo volgergli in mano, come dicesi, le carte, e con qualche finzione sottrarmi dalla necessità di scoprire lo stratagemma; ma

66 On this topic see Raffaella Sarti, ‘Dangerous Liaisons: Servants as “Children” Taught by Their Masters and as “Teachers” of Their Masters’ Children (Italy and France, Sixteenth to Twenty-First Centuries)’, *Paedagogica Historica*, 43 (2007), 565–87.

67 Piazza, *L’omicida irreprensibile*, I, 18–19.

68 Piazza, *L’omicida irreprensibile*, I, 18–20.

inesperto qual ero e Fanciullo, non avevo la prontezza di spirito sufficiente per emendare l'errore.⁶⁹

This issue is presented many times in the novel, and also signals the development and maturation of the main character. After his escape from the outlaws' cave, he has to describe his previous life to the young benefactor who has helped him. This time though, he tells the story 'mescolando quelle verità che pregiudicare non mi potevano, ed alcune false asserzioni che da me esagerate maggiormente lo impegnavano ad essere favorevole'.⁷⁰ This is further evidence of the successful self-education of the protagonist, who has learnt the art of dissimulation through painful and dramatic experiences. Even at this point, his behaviour is accompanied by remorse: gratitude towards his helper would have required him to be fully sincere with him.

The attempted fraud organised by Anselmo brings together the two main issues related to the dispersion of one's own wealth: unstable behaviour with money (the gambling of large sums of money 'sulla parola', with unknown persons); and the risk of fraud. The discovery of the plot signals also a definitive change in the father's character. After a violent confrontation, which leads the son to abandon the house, the father disappears from the narrative: during his flight and subsequent adventures the protagonist remains alone, and the presence of his parent is limited to letters and messages. However, from the moment of the discovered disobedience, continuing until the end of the novel, the paternal figure evolves into a positive one, so that in the rest of the novel there will be no trace left of the father's old behaviours.

69 Piazza, *L'omicida irreprensibile*, I, 26.

70 Piazza, *L'omicida irreprensibile*, II, p. 44.

Beware the confidence man

The novel is filled with tricks and swindling usually at the expense of the protagonist, or his father. On one occasion – the organisation of the joint escape from the house of Eleonora's uncle in Calabria – the trick is organised and performed by the protagonist himself. In most cases, however, he is the intended victim. The novelist describes meticulously the entire organisation and setting of these plots. In this sense, these examples can be seen as caveats for the reader, who can learn from them how to behave in similar situations, and when confronting similar people.

The deceptions are of very different kinds. In most cases, though, they involve a false identity and social status (as in the case of the Neapolitan already mentioned). When the perpetrator of the deception is a woman, the final result is usually a shotgun marriage. This is the case in the first adventure faced by the protagonist after leaving home, when an officer and his daughter trick him into marrying her; but it is also very similar to the last episode with Madama Faurene.⁷¹ In both episodes, the seduction of the 'victim' is followed by an action (the couple found in intimacy by the woman's father) or state of things (the pregnancy), forcing the protagonist to commit to a marriage.

Another type of deception present in the novel involves siblings, or the extended family. If the first example is the scam by Anselmo and the Neapolitan, the harshest involves the agent of their family who, driven by a mad passion for a dancer, becomes hugely indebted, loses the family's wealth, and then disappears.⁷²

71 The episode of Madama Faurene is further complicated by her ambiguous identity, which has been so artfully kept secret that only after her death will it be possible for the protagonist to discover part of the truth about her (she was not the rich widow from Rome that she pretended to be) and it will be only in the very last pages, with Eleonora's recognition of Madama Faurene as her mother, that the protagonist (and the reader) will know the entire truth about her.

72 Piazza, *L'omicida irreprensibile*, II, 176–79. The family's estate has therefore been lost not because of the father's bad behaviour, but as an unexpected blow caused by a trusted, long-time collaborator of the house.

After each of these episodes, the narrator refers to his own young age and inexperience as causes of his fall. Inexperience and ‘fervor dell’etade’ lead the young person to the ‘solletico delle pericolose occasioni, degl’impulsi de’ seduttori nostri, dello stimolo de’ sensi’.⁷³

Why are there so many examples of such practices? On the one hand, con games seem to be a sub-theme of the narrative. The influence of *the Hunchback’s Tale*, where almost all of the characters are tricked, lied to, and cheated on, can be seen reflected in the novel’s plot. On the other hand, this aspect can be related to the young age of the protagonist, and his educative path. In this novel, as in *La filosofessa*, one of the main issues is about the responsibility and reliability of individuals. A young man of fifteen was already capable – and legally responsible – for certain actions, but social habits (especially among the Venetian aristocracy and other élite groups) kept him under the supervision and control of his father. The novel offers a perfect example of this habit, when the protagonist arrives at the end of his disobedient path, becoming an adult, and from that point bends his will to that of his father.

The tricks and frauds of the novel can also be seen as a way to highlight the unstable position of the young protagonist as he finds his way into the world, and the need to get an understanding of how to avoid bad company *before* getting old enough to be independent, and legally reliable. It is an educative process based solely on experience, and characterised, especially in Piazza, by a certain degree of danger.

73 Piazza, *L’omicida irreprendibile*, I, 33-34.

Model(s) of behaviour and internal contradiction

The tension between passion and (familial) duty, already found in *La filosofessa*, is a typical theme of the eighteenth-century novel, as well as in reality.⁷⁴ In the case of Piazza, as Morace pointed out, this conflictual dualism is present in several episodes, so that the protagonist seems often ‘prisoner’ of the uncertainty between the motivations of the lover, and those of the son. However the end of the novel, and the final settling of the protagonist with Eleonora, display a normalised situation in which passion has been definitively overcome, in favour of a quiet and ordered life. This situation, which recalls that at the end of the third volume of *La filosofessa italiana*, has its roots in a pivotal episode of the novel, the attempted kidnapping of Eleonora.

This is the last act of ‘disobedience’ performed by the protagonist who, driven by a consuming passion for Eleonora, and against his word given to her cousin and uncle, decides to escape with her. The attempt is supported by Anselmo, who has reappeared (as a fake doctor) and gained the trust of his old pupil. The plan is to organise Eleonora’s flight from the palace, so the two of them may take their vows and leave for Venice. Once in the city, they are to marry officially.⁷⁵

The main resistance to this plan is embodied by a woman, the daughter of the innkeeper, who until that point had been the most devoted and committed helper of the couple. When asked to help them on this occasion, however (‘esposi a quella amabile Giovine l’ordito stratagemma nostro e le mostrai che mancava soltanto l’assenso suo, onde porlo in esecuzione’),⁷⁶ she resists the proposal fiercely. Her defence is important because it represents a positive model of filial behaviour.

74 Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*.

75 Neither canonical nor civil law recognised the individual exchange of vows as a legitimate way of getting married. However, the kidnapping in itself – if the couple spent the night together – was enough to require (and allow) a shotgun wedding. In the case of aristocrats though, if authorities did not accept the union – more likely those between a patrician and a non patrician – the marriage was recognised, but the family remained excluded from aristocratic ranks. See Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*, 221–93.

76 Piazza, *L’omicida irreprensibile*, II, 123.

Although she understands the love and passion felt by the protagonist: ‘la compassione e l’amore è lodabile’,⁷⁷ nonetheless, ‘il primo amore è quello di noi medesimi, nè m’insegna la natura ad innalzare altari sulle mie rovine’.⁷⁸ The main problem is that in no way would it be possible to help them without putting in danger her position and that of her father. She resists until the very end, and only when the protagonist puts a gun to his head, and threatens to kill himself if she does not help him, does she acquiesce.

This scene foreshadows what will happen later in the plot. The approving reference to the ‘amore di sé’ is first contradicted by the threat of suicide (which will be then carried out to its extreme consequences later, when the protagonist discovers that Eleonora apparently died during her attempted flight). But above all, the innkeeper’s daughter’s defence prefigures the victory of filial love over erotic passion which will happen during the organization of the flight. While awaiting the arrival of Eleonora and Anselmo, the young man meets his father by chance, and has to save him from three violent outlaws. Once the old man is safe, however, he is again hit by ‘amorosi delirj’, and tries to get back to the meeting. His father asks him to stay with him. The final decision made by the protagonist symbolises in many ways a coming of age, and the beginning (although not completed, as the attempted suicide will soon demonstrate) of a more ‘rational’ and obedient life.

A fronte d’una Amante traditrice nulla tanti e tanti stimano il loro Padre, e non solo la filiale obbligazione, ma scordano ancora i più comuni doveri della natura per seguire i dettami di un’ostinata passione a cui danno nome d’Amore.⁷⁹

77 Piazza, *L’omicida irreprensibile*, II, 123.

78 Piazza, *L’omicida irreprensibile*, II, 124.

79 Piazza, *L’omicida irreprensibile*, II, 141.

Conversely, the protagonist chooses a different path: ‘io, lode al cielo, all’Amore d’Amante quello di figlio non posposi in quel cimento’.⁸⁰ As already mentioned though, this passage does not completely solve the internal conflict between two desires, obedience against passion. The source of the contradiction is also to be found in the figure of Eleonora, who has never been an ‘Amante traditrice’, and on the contrary had been but damaged by her lover.⁸¹ The solution to this conflict can only arrive from two violent acts: the announcement of Eleonora’s death, and the consequent suicide attempted by the protagonist. The bullet which defaces him almost magically seems to wash away all his remaining passion. The moral of the story is presented by the narrator as a rebuttal of passion, in favour of a rational, controlled relationship. As the narrator points out:

Per le donne quasi tutti siam pazzi, facciamo per esse molto più che far non dovremmo, ma non siamo alfieri tanto degni di derisione, e di perdono immeritevoli, quando tutto azzardiamo per essere loro costanti, quando per esse profaniamo i denari nostri, meniamo torbidi i giorni, vegliamo le notti, non abbiám pace un momento, scordiam noi medesimi; e viviamo in esse soltanto.⁸²

When his wound is completely healed, he feels sane both physically, and psychologically: ‘risanato non meno nel capo che nel cervello’.⁸³

It is not by chance that the attitude of the protagonist towards other sentimental relationships afterwards is dramatically different. A case in point is the affair with Madama Faurene. The main preoccupation for the young man is to ascertain the position and status of her fiancé, and listen ‘senza inorridire’⁸⁴ to the proposal made by his father that he marry her. The main doubt he has about the union is not about love,

80 Piazza, *L’omicida irrepreensibile*, II, 141.

81 A long and passionate defence of Eleonora is made by the protagonist in front of his father, Piazza, *L’omicida irrepreensibile*, II, 147–48.

82 Piazza, *L’omicida irrepreensibile*, II, 156–57.

83 Piazza, *L’omicida irrepreensibile*, II, 167.

84 Piazza, *L’omicida irrepreensibile*, II, 186.

but trust, as he does not feel ‘quel rispetto intrinseco che alla di lei presenza ostentavo, e non sapevo persuadermi che veritiere fossero le relazioni che di sè e della magnifica Famiglia sua tratto tratto mi dava’.⁸⁵

A practical tone has replaced any discussion about passion, and love.⁸⁶ Even the pregnancy, although arising between two unmarried persons, is somehow tolerated.⁸⁷ Although Madama Faurene’s death frees him of the obligation of marrying her, the attitude of the protagonist does not change even after meeting Eleonora for the last time, so that the final remarks about their platonic ménage concern the managing of her dowry, and how she delivers her money to him.

The pacified character who emerges at the end of the *Bildung* therefore is one who has solved the conflict between passion and duty in favour of the second. It is an individual who has accepted a role in society and in his family, and devotes himself to the quiet management of his own estate. This self-management would not have been possible without the experience collected during his adventures as a disobedient subject.

Piazza’s approach to the educative pattern of the novel is therefore both similar, and different from that of Chiari. On the one hand, the abbot maintains a sort of idealised form of ménage and family relationship, where matters of money and wealth are more taken for granted, than actually the centre of any discussion. On the other hand, Piazza centres a good deal of his novel on the safety of the family wealth, as well as the majority of his examples. This theme is central in the novel, and suggests that the mentality discussed and disputed seems to be that of the higher

85 Piazza, *L’omicida irreprensibile*, II, 188.

86 ‘Alla fin fine Madama era vedova; ero io in istato di sposarla con non piccolo vantaggio’, Piazza, *L’omicida irreprensibile*, II, 199.

87 ‘Attesi i preliminari de’ sponsali nostri, Niuno stupì che fosse incinta Madama’, *L’omicida irreprensibile*, II, 199.

classes, which represented one of the core publics for the novel, rather than the lower ones.⁸⁸

It is interesting to compare the end of this educative process, and of the novel, with the analysis made by Franco Moretti of the nineteenth-century novel of education.⁸⁹ For Moretti, these novels are characterised by an internal (and external) clash between individualization movements – what protagonists desire and need for their individual realization – and socialization movements – what society requires protagonists to do, in terms of behaviour, but also in terms of controlling desires.

In Piazza's novel, disobedience ends up with a pacified movement. The erotic compulsion which characterised the love between Eleonora and the protagonist, is definitively neutralised by the possibility of incest. There is a sort of abandonment of the main characters – the strong Eleonora and the relatively weak protagonist – to the 'normality' of everyday life; a normality which is plotless, and therefore corresponds to the end of the narrative.

The exemplarity of the main story, and that of single characters and episodes, form a linear progression which ends up with a complete pacification of the tensions between the individual and his social boundaries (embodied by the father). Although a debut, *l'omicida* also recalls narrative uses and devices which will be typical of later novels by Piazza. Among others, this includes that tendency toward 'gothic' themes which has been recognised by many critics as one of his main features.

This attention to the sensational and the increasing use of implicit instead of explicit *exempla*, will be typical of Piazza's later production. The novel *I zingani*, that will be analysed in the next chapter, offers an interesting perspective from which to see these changes. *I zingani* represents in many ways the 'revolt' of the *exemplum*. It

88 Further evidence can be found in elements mentioned before: the dangers of getting educated by servants, exemplified by the character of Anselmo, is a case in point.

89 Franco Moretti, *The way of the world*.

does not have a positive protagonist, but a couple of vicious, and dangerous deuteragonists, who fight their way through the world. It is a novel of dis-education, but precisely for this reason, it also shows clearly the moral and social boundaries that were not to be trespassed.

5. Excessive disobedience, alternative education: *L'avventuriere* and *I zingani*.

The two novels analysed in this chapter, Basso's *L'avventuriere* (1761) and Piazza's *I zingani* (1769) stand as examples of the many possible ways in which novelists deal with education and disobedience in their works. The representation of disobedient subjects and their dis-educative paths differs from novels already considered. Both *I zingani* and *L'avventuriere* for instance represent alternative forms of education: Basso's novel promotes a traditional way of education; Piazza's narrative by contrast centres on a story of excessive disobedience. Causes and explanation of such behaviours are also different from those presented in novels considered before: the parent-child conflict is absent. The disobedient choices of the protagonist do not result from a wrong education received from parents, or tutors. Rather, juvenile passion and inexperience are to blame.

At the same time, these two novels show two opposing ways of interpreting the didactic functions of this genre in the second half of the eighteenth century. As Franco Fido points out,¹ there were two visions: a conservative one saw the danger of

¹ See Fido, *Il paradiso dei buoni compagni*, pp. 216–17. The debate about the dangers and virtues of novels has been one of the most studied aspects of this genre in the eighteenth century since the beginning of the twentieth century, with the article by Emilio Bertana, 'Pro e contro i romanzi del Settecento'. The two main contemporary essays about this topic which have often been explored by scholars, are Giovanni Battista Roberti, *Del leggere libri di Metafisica e divertimento, trattati due* (Bologna: nella stamperia del Sant'Uffizio, 1769) and Giuseppe Maria Galanti, *Osservazioni intorno a' romanzi, alla morale, e a' diversi generi di sentimento, con un Saggio sulla condizione delle donne e sulle leggi coniugali* (Naples: Merande, 1780). On the comparison between these two see (at least) Elvio Guagnini, 'Rifiuto e apologia del romanzo nel

novels precisely in the exemplarity of vicious and evil behaviour; a more ‘modern’ one promoted such examples of vice and virtue as the best way to teach morality to readers.² The point of contention between these two visions is the trust (or mistrust) of the reader: her or his ability to interpret the message coming from such examples. What makes these two novels particularly interesting is the peculiar way in which both deal with this aspect. Both Piazza and Basso present their protagonists’ adventures as *exempla* for the reader.

In both novels, however, there is a tension between didactical purposes and the narrative development of the novel. In the case of *L’avventuriere* the conflict is caused by the author’s ideology. Basso often expresses conservative views on literature and society. His ideas in this sense reflect those of the contemporary Accademia de’ Granelleschi. This group attacked ‘modern novels’ as responsible for the corruption of style and morality. In this sense, *L’avventuriere* is an experiment in conveying this traditional, conservative ideology using the structure, themes and *topoi* of ‘modern’ novels.³ The main problem is that the novel’s message does not emerge clearly, perhaps because of the construction of the protagonist. It is difficult to find in Rinaldo an example of virtue, either at the beginning or at the end of his

secondo Settecento italiano. Note su due manifesti (Roberti e Galanti)’, in *Letteratura e società: scritti di italianistica e di critica letteraria per il XXV anniversario dell’insegnamento universitario di Giuseppe Petronio*, 2 vols (Palermo: Palumbo, 1980), I, 291–309; Crotti, ‘Alla ricerca del codice’. For an overview of the debate see Crivelli, “*Né Arturo*”, pp. 57–64; Caesar, ‘Bagatelle, Bamboccerie, and Bordellerie’.

2 ‘Da un lato, c’è chi approva il progetto di compor libri anche per le persone mediocrementemente istruite (Denina) o loda la funzione divulgativa dei romanzi di Chiari (Piazza), o, come Galanti, sostiene che il ritratto del vizio fornito dai romanzi “vale meglio di ogni altra lezione per la condotta di vita. La buona educazione per le donne non consiste in temere il mondo e gli uomini in parole, ma in ben conoscere l’uno e gli altri”. Dall’altro lato stanno i conservatori, come Carlo Gozzi, Baretti o il gesuita padre Roberti, che riconoscono nel pullulare di una letteratura di divertimento la strada attraverso la quale fasce sociali fin lì escluse dalla cultura (donne, lavoratori, ecc.) possono accedere ai libri e ai giornali’, Fido, *Il paradiso dei buoni compagni*, pp. 217–18.

3 In this sense, Basso’s may recall the ‘failed’ novelistic attempt made by Gasparo Gozzi in 1760, with the serialised allegorical novel *Il mondo morale. Conversazioni della Congrega de’ Pellegrini* (Venice: Colombani, 1760), that responded precisely to the needs and critiques to existing works by Chiari and other novelists.

adventures.⁴ In this sense, the lack of coherence undermines the didactic purposes of the novelist.

The didactic device of protagonists' exemplarity is taken to its limits in Piazza's *I zingani*. The story of culprits Corradino and Celino has been highlighted by critics⁵ as a crucial point in the development of Piazza's narrative, from the original approach based on works by Chiari and others, to the pre-romantic period of the 1770s. The lack of virtue can also be found in almost all other characters of the novel. Unlike other novelists, Piazza breaks two sacred rules of didacticism. First, he almost eliminates the intervention of the author or narrator, which had had the delicate task of guiding the reader through the text. Second, he does not follow the usual narrative pattern based on the couple 'virtue rewarded and vice punished'. Instead, the narrative is a story of vice, disobedience, sin and crime, which get only partially punished. In the case of Corradino this happens at the very end of the novel, while the repentance of the second protagonist, Celino, takes the form of a second narrative, the sequel, *Il romito*.

This makes *I zingani* one of the most advanced experiments in exemplarity in eighteenth-century Venetian novels. Piazza in this way trusted readers with the freedom to interpret the text, partially abandoning the 'paternalistic' attitude of other novelists. At the same time, the attempt is not completely successful, as the author is forced to intervene by using footnotes, when the protagonist's arguments become morally or politically dangerous.

The first part of this chapter is devoted to *L'avventuriere*, and centres in particular on the relationship between literary representation and the traditionalistic vision that characterises the novel. The second part presents an analysis of Piazza's *I*

4 In this sense, he resembles Piazza's *Omicida irrepreensibile*. The female deuteragonists of the novel, Elisa and D. Isabella, in this sense are much more determined and strong (another similarity with *L'omicida*).

5 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, pp. 78–82.

zingani. It analyses the double education of the two protagonists, and the interpretation of didacticism implied by this representation.

Traditional disobedience

L'avventuriere, o sia memorie di Rinaldo Dalisso is the debut novel of Antonio Benedetto Basso (or Bassi), and the only work of this genre written by the author. It came out in 1761, just one year before *L'omicida irreprendibile*.⁶ Very limited information exists about Basso (or Bassi, as he is also known). He was a young author from *terraferma*, most probably Bassano del Grappa.⁷ After an initial period in Veneto,⁸ he moved abroad, to England and then to France.⁹ In the 1780s, he publishes two important books about Italian literature and culture: a defence of Italian poetry and poets¹⁰ against a contemptuous account made by an English traveller,¹¹ and an anthology of Italian authors.¹²

6 The title is recorded in the *Mandati* books under the name of Colombani, 9 August 1761, n. 326 (MS), Bartoli. See ASV, *Arti*, 341.

7 The information about this author is in Bartolomeo Gamba, *De' bassanesi illustri narrazione: con un catalogo degli scrittori di Bassano del secolo 18* (Bassano: Remondini, 1807), pp. 71–72. 'In fronte a questo romanzo trovo scritto di pugno da Valentino Novelletto: che l'autore era bassanese, e figlio di un nostro maestro di scuola detto il *Perrucchetta*; inoltre, che da giovane passò in Francia e in Inghilterra, e che pubblicò a Parigi una sua Confutazione alla celebre opera di Sherlock intorno ai poeti italiani'.

8 The place of Treviso at the end of the novel's dedication is possible evidence in locating Basso at this time. Most of the remaining documents on and by this author come from the 1780s, and are located between England and France.

9 There he taught English and Italian, first in Lyon, then in Paris. 'Maitre de Langues Angloise & Italienne M. Bassi des Académies degl'Intronati di Siena, & degli Arcadi di Roma, ci-devant Professeur de Langue Italianne à Londres, & à Oxford', *Almanach civil, politique et littéraire de Lyon et du département de Rhône* (Lyon: Daval, 1778), p. 209. Around 1780 he had already moved to Paris. *L'Esprit des journaux, françois et étrangers*, Juillet 1782, p. 419, advertises a project of subscription for an anthology of Italian authors. Anyone interested in subscribing could contact directly Bassi in his house, in rue Neuve des Petit-Champs. Basso was also among the correspondents of Benjamin Franklin's letters. Basso was also a correspondent of Giovan Battista Roberti, see Augustin Backer and Alois Backer, *Bibliothèque des écrivains de la compagnie de Jésus ou notices bibliographiques*, 2 vols (Liège: Grandmont-Donders, 1854), I, 527.

10 Antonio Benedetto Basso, *Observations sur les poètes italiens, par M. Bassi, ou réponse aux remarques sur les mêmes poètes du voyageur anglois M. Sherlock* (London [Paris]: Duchesne-Esprit, 1780).

11 Martin Sherlock, *Lettres d'un voyageur anglais* (London: [n. pub.], 1779).

12 Antonio Benedetto Basso, *Scelta di poesie italiane de' più gelebri autori di ogni secolo* (Paris: Lambert and Baudouin, 1784).

It is difficult to say if at the time of *L'avventuriere*'s publication Basso was still living in Italy or had already moved abroad. One episode in the novel¹³ might imply that he was either planning to leave, or had already moved to France. Nonetheless, in many ways the novel reflects cultural debates happening in Venice at the time: ideas and polemics exchanged among intellectual circles and also the wider public of the city.

In 1761, the cultural life of Venice was in turmoil. The theatrical world had recently witnessed the success of Carlo Gozzi's plays, who with the Granelleschi began a long polemical campaign against the other two playwrights, Goldoni and Chiari. Carlo Gozzi's attacks resulted in a reconciliation between Goldoni and his arch-enemy Chiari.¹⁴ That same year, the abbot had replaced Gasparo Gozzi as editor of *La gazzetta veneta* and began responding to attacks against him (and Goldoni) from there.

Bassi's novel partly reflects this situation. It was published by Paolo Colombani, a bookseller actively involved in the dispute on Gozzi's side. Colombani published Carlo's *fiabe teatrali*, his pamphlet against Chiari¹⁵, as well as compositions in prose and poetry by the Granelleschi. In *Memorie inutili*, Carlo tells how the Granelleschi used to have their meetings in Colombani's bookshop.¹⁶ The

13 The protagonist, Rinaldo, at some point moves from Italy to France, more precisely Lyon, and starts working as a teacher of Italian and French.

14 See for instance the article by Chiari in the *Gazzetta* n. 72 (17 October 1761): 'Dalle stampe del Colombani uscì Giovedì alla luce del Mondo un Libricciulo contro di me, contro del Sig. Dott. Goldoni, ed altri ancora, il quale è dedicato ironicamente a me stesso. Più di così non ne saprei render ragione; perocchè da molti riguardi non essendomi permesso di rispondere sullo stile medesimo, non voglio nemmeno darmi la pena di leggerlo, onde poterne dir d'avvantaggio'.

15 Carlo Gozzi, *Fogli sopra alcune massime del Genio*.

16 'La bottega di Paolo Colombani Librajo in Venezia era il centro de' ragguagli di quella guerra, ed era molto frequentata da' Granelleschi, i quali si proposero di dar dell'utile al Colombani, e di ridere. [...] tanti altri nostri Accademici fecero uscire da quella bottega de' fogli poetici burloni mensuali latini, e toscani fulminanti i cattivi poeti, e i cattivi scrittori, e nel giorno che usciva il foglio la bottega del Colombani era un sciame di comperatori di quella novità', Carlo Gozzi, *Memorie inutili della sua vita scritte da lui medesimo*, 3 vols (Venice: Palese, 1793), I, 289.

Granelleschi were in open war against Chiari and his partisans, but also took part in other cultural debates.¹⁷

The affinity of Basso with the traditionalism expressed by the Granelleschi emerges also from the text. It can be found in the protagonist's attention toward language and style when discussing literature. But a certain traditionalism seems also to influence the representation of disobedience and education. This is certainly very different from the novels considered in other chapters. In *La filosofessa* and *L'Omicida*, the behaviour of disobedient subjects was mainly caused by wrong examples and education given by adults. The main cause for Rinaldo's disobedience is the inexperience and the restlessness of youth. Furthermore, in other novels disobedience was accompanied by alternative forms of education and most commonly the intensive reading of *letteratura amena*. In *L'avventuriere* however the protagonist receives a very traditional education, and the parental figure in charge of the young protagonist is also a model of virtue and good parenting. The novel does not challenge traditional ways of education, both in the stricter sense of formal education (Rinaldo studies Latin language and authors) and the informal one, as his tutor's actions are all presented as legitimate, and justified by the narrator himself.

The presence of conservative ideas about literature or education does not have any influence on the protagonist or the story itself. The narrative is centred on a romantic triangle between Rinaldo and two young ladies. It is a morally ambiguous situation that is only resolved at the end of the novel. Rinaldo's feelings for the two

17 The name of the novel's dedicatee (the dedication is dated Treviso, 10 September 1761) Lodovica Grimani Zaguri, also points to the same group. Lodovica, née Grimani, had married in 1761 Antonio Pietro Zaguri. The *Rime* collected for their wedding included poems by Carlo Gozzi, and Andrea Farsetti, another member of Granelleschi, and were published by Colombani in 1761. See Pompeo Molmenti, *Carteggi casanoviani*, 2 vols (Milan: Sandron, 1816), II, v. Lodovica and Antonio Pietro Zaguri are both inserted by Giacomo Nani in the third aristocratic class. Their names are associated with the cultural and artistic life of the city. Pietro Zaguri helped both Lorenzo da Ponte and Casanova, and Lodovica probably accompanied Melchiorre Cesarotti during a visit to Rome, as recorded in a poem by Luigi Godard: 'A S.E. la nobil Donna Signora Lodovica Zaguri Grimani venuta in Roma col Sig. Abate Cesarotti, e due celebri Avvocati Veneziani', in Luigi Godard, *Poesie di Cimante Micenio* (Rome: Salviucci, 1823), p. 228.

women remain uncertain until the end of the narrative. In this sense, Rinaldo is everything but a model of virtue. The result is an interesting short circuit between a traditionalistic perspective expressed and promoted through the novel, and the actual example given to readers by its protagonist.

The novel is divided into twelve chapters, called *capi*. Excluding the first two set in Florence, each chapter corresponds to a different city following the main character's movements.¹⁸ The protagonist, Rinaldo Dalisso is an aristocrat from one of the richest families of Florence. He has lost both parents. When he is four, after his mother's death, he passes under the tutelage of an uncle. The tutor is 'al paro di me facoltoso, che si coltivava l'amore di tutta la Patria, essendo di un carattere onesto, e Civile'.¹⁹ Thus, unlike in other novels, the person in charge of the protagonist's education is a model of virtue, who will remain so for the rest of the narrative.

Rinaldo's uncle also takes care of a young woman, Elisa, who is the same age as the protagonist. Elisa also lost her father, and Rinaldo's tutor has decided to take her under tutelage. In their early years, boy and girl are brought up together. Despite different social origins they are treated equally by the generous man.²⁰ The tutor's educative approach is traditional, and reflects once more a conservative ideology. This is particularly evident, for example, in the education chosen for the two pupils. When they are nine, the tutor sends them to private teachers. However, they are educated in different ways, as required by their different sexes.²¹

Living in a 'continua familiarità' the two pupils soon begin to feel attracted to each other. Growing up, this mutual affection deepens. Once again, the tutor's choices reflect a conservative mentality. The social difference between the two young

18 The series of cities: Florence, Siena and Genoa, Venice, Rome, Naples, Florence, Naples, Lyon, Barcelona, Saragoza, and Genoa again.

19 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 11.

20 'Mi fu destinata la stessa educazione, e lo stesso modo di vivere, come ad Elisa', Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 11.

21 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 11. Elisa is sent to a neighbour 'molto pratica nei lavori donneschi'.

pupils makes their love impossible. Therefore, as an attentive and careful adult, Rinaldo's uncle recognises and fears the consequences of such acquaintance. First he increases his monitoring. Then, especially once they turn fourteen, 'età Fanciullesca bensì, ma che non mancò di renderlo geloso, ed accorto, cosicchè se per lo avanti non badava più che tanto su i nostri andamenti, si pose allora ad esaminare ogni nostro passo per più minuto'.²² As seen in other novels, adolescence is perceived as a delicate and dangerous age. More importantly, it also increases the restlessness of the protagonist, who is soon ready for the main disobedient act. Rinaldo arranges their escape, and succeeds in convincing Elisa, who had at first resisted the idea.²³ With the help of a conniving doctor, Rinaldo gets his uncle's permission to leave Florence for Siena with his servant, Gerlando. Only one day later, Elisa successfully escapes from the city with a friend of her, Zanetta. In the novel, this character has the role of a witness in charge of protecting Elisa's virtue. Despite being almost invisible, the female friend silently guarantees that Elisa is always accompanied, and therefore safe from any suspicion.

The group moves to Genoa where Rinaldo gets acquainted with a widow, D. Isabella. Despite her young age (the same as Rinaldo) her brother Don Raimondo Doina does not want her to remarry, as he wants to keep the wealth she has inherited from her husband. The figure of Don Raimondo plays a pivotal role in the novel. Firstly defined by Isabella as 'un bizzarro carattere',²⁴ he will soon become the main antagonist of Rinaldo, and a negative force in the narrative. His influence on the protagonist's adventures is dramatically increased by Raimondo's invisibility. The reader discovers his actions only through the accounts of the narrator, or other

22 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 13.

23 'non mancò [...] di propormi alcune difficoltà, che avrei ancor'io temute per vere, se il desio [...] di volerla continuamente, a dispetto di chiunque al mio fianco, non mi avesse reso cieco del tutto', Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 23.

24 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 34.

characters. This ploy makes his action even more disruptive and dramatic in changing the turn of events. Through his ‘powerful absence’ this character embodies a narrative function that in other novels was usually reserved for chance, and ill luck.

When the fugitive Rinaldo meets Isabella, he invents a story about his identity and circumstances. He takes a false name, ‘nome a capriccio’²⁵, and describes Elisa as a sister, and Zanetta as Gernando’s daughter. As already seen in other novels, learning how to tell lies and mixing true and false statements (or taking up false identities) is a common exercise for disobedient protagonists. Rinaldo will gradually perfect this skill during his adventures.

D. Isabella falls in love with Rinaldo, but her first approaches make Elisa jealous. The romantic triangle created by this first meeting will continue until Isabella’s death at the very end of the novel. From this first meeting on, Rinaldo’s feelings towards Isabella are contradictory. Even though he has just run away from home with Elisa, he seems flattered by Isabella’s attention: ‘meritava l’amor di chiunque, mentre, sebben vedova, era Giovine, spiritosa, e avvenente, di una ciera bella, e gioviale’.²⁶ Rinaldo tries to justify this indecision as caused by a clash between ‘leggi di Cavaliere’ (due to Isabella) and ‘leggi di Amante’ (due to Elisa). The behaviour and feelings of Rinaldo towards the two women (and in particular Isabella) remain unclear for most of the novel. Initially, however, Rinaldo solves the issue of Elisa’s jealousy by leaving the city immediately, and moving to Venice. Here, he invents a new identity, pretending to be a French gentleman.

The appearance of a possible rival, meanwhile, has also worried Elisa, who now asks him to marry her. The young protagonist, however, resists this proposal. They make a compromise by signing a legal statement in front of a lawyer, stating

25 Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 34.

26 Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 36.

Rinaldo's intention to marry Elisa. The signing and preparation of the document is part of a legal sub-theme which emerges several times during the novel: the protagonist will be involved in two lawsuits (one presented by the antagonist Don Raimondo) later in the narrative. The legal engagement between Rinaldo and Elisa also highlights a shift in their relationship: if their escape was caused by love and passion, already at this point they have moved into the realm of legality, and self-interest. However, while Elisa's action is driven both by the need to preserve her honour, and at the same time their love, Rinaldo seems only eager to save his newly conquered independence. Even when he agrees to make the contract, he explains to the reader that the document can be easily repealed and that he uses it only to make Elisa less anxious about their irregular situation.

Almost caught by the agents of Rinaldo's uncle, they leave Venice and move to Rome. Here, Rinaldo for the second time meets Isabella, who disguised as a man has been following him since their departure from Genoa. After their first meeting, she has run away from her brother, and has been able to find Rinaldo, first in Venice, and later in Rome. Because of her love, she has taken enormous risks, exposing herself 'per tenervi dietro, alla maldicenza del popolo, ai pregiudicj della Sua Casa, ai disaggi del viaggio, ed a mille altre cose'.²⁷

The episode highlights the pivotal role of Isabella's character within the plot. If her brother is the main antagonist of Rinaldo, from this point on her own role is that of the main helper. This role is already prepared in this episode by showing Isabella's strength and skills. Despite Rinaldo's uncle having several men at his disposal to search for the fugitives, a young woman alone was the only person able to track Rinaldo down. Through her investigations, she was also able to uncover all his lies,²⁸

²⁷ Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 57

²⁸ 'Vedendo, che qual nuovo Proteo in mille forme vi cangiate, or Turinese, ed or Francese

including the identity of and true relationship with Elisa. Her love is so strong that she decides to join them anyway, and stand by Rinaldo's side as a friend. She settles with them, and Isabella and Elisa stop competing and become close friends.²⁹

The first occasion on which Isabella is able to prove herself as a helper, happens soon after the establishment of the new *ménage à trois*. Rinaldo faces for the first time a financial issue:

era questo un imbroglio di gran conseguenza, perocchè si era formata una Famiglia di otto persone, delle quali niuna mi atteneva per parentela, ma chi per amore, e chi per debito meco si erano uniti. Eravamo in una grande Città, onde per mantenerci con quel decoro, che richiedeva il nostro stato, ne bisognavano non pochi.³⁰

The problem for the disobedient, fugitive young nobleman is therefore to find a way to maintain the people around him. The issue of money and interest becomes, from this point on, another recurring theme of the narrative. D. Isabella, who gives him a large sum to cover their expenses, solves the problem this time. Isabella's presence also has consequences for other members of the group. Zanetta's role in particular becomes useless. As a silent companion to 'guard' Elisa's honour, Zanetta served to make her friend's position acceptable; but the presence of Isabella makes the other redundant and very soon Zanetta is provided with a dowry and married to a man 'benestante, e prudente'.³¹ Interestingly, Rinaldo and Isabella in this case perform a 'paternalistic' behaviour usually associated with masters. They stand as vicarious parents, providing Zanetta with a dowry and more importantly, choosing her marriage prospect.³²

fingendovi, per godere in pace li vostri amori', Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 57.

29 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 61.

30 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 62.

31 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 65.

32 Although Zanetta is not their servant, in many other occasions her position is presented and implied as very similar to that of a dependent. For example, the first time Rinaldo makes up a story about the *ménage* he identifies her as the daughter of his servant Gernando.

While the company is moving from Rome to Naples, Rinaldo gets the news that an old relative has died, leaving all his possessions to him.³³ Rinaldo decides to go back to Florence to claim the inheritance, despite the resistance of Isabella and Elisa who are afraid it might be a trap set up by Rinaldo's uncle. The novel gives a detailed account of Rinaldo's thoughts and doubts. On the one hand, the young protagonist thinks about himself already as an adult and independent man, and does not share the fear of the two women. On the other hand, he is afraid of 'le beffe de Nobili, l'ammirazione del vulgo l'oggetto delle dicerie de' malevoli'.³⁴ This decision highlights two important elements related to Rinaldo. First, it indicates a step forward in his *Bildung*, as he thinks about himself as a fugitive adolescent no more, but rather as an independent adult. Despite this belief, however, the path to his full independence will be harder and longer than expected. Second, it shows the importance of honour and social acceptance in Rinaldo's decisions. In Florence, he proves at least that the suspicion of Isabella and Elisa about his uncle were without foundation. Demonstrating once more his qualities as a tutor and responsible adult, Rinaldo's uncle has already forgiven his escape: 'parte condonando alla mia età giovanile [...] Parte ancora all'imperizia delle vicende del Mondo pareva che prendesse piuttosto le parti di me, che quelle di uno Zio giustamente sdegnato'.³⁵ Once again this passage points at two defects of the young nephew as the main cause of his disobedience.

The legal theme which first emerged in Venice, reappears in Florence. Juvenile inexperience makes Rinaldo the victim of a lawyer who, in charge of the claim for his inheritance, extorts a large amount of money for nothing. Another blow comes from a second lawsuit presented by Isabella's brother D. Raimondo against Rinaldo.

33 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 69.

34 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 69.

35 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 74.

Raimondo accuses him of seducing Isabella and running away with her, and asks for a generous compensation for this, as well as for the money she has given Rinaldo in Naples. The rules and procedures of the legal system are impossible to understand for the protagonist, and in this sense they mesh well with the negative function embodied by Raimondo.

The ‘invisibility’ of this character makes it also possible for him to extend his action in different places. From Elisa’s letters, Rinaldo discovers that in Naples the situation has dramatically changed. D. Isabella has been taken by force, kidnapped from their hotel by a group of men led by her brother. They have brought her back to Genoa. Without Isabella’s financial support, Elisa ends up penniless. Rinaldo goes back to Naples to rescue her.

From this moment, the absence of the helper Isabella brings a dramatic change in the life of Rinaldo and Elisa. For the first time, Rinaldo needs to earn a living. As in other novels, *L’avventuriere* stages the contradiction between status and wealth. Being an aristocrat limits Rinaldo’s freedom of choice of what he can do. While social appearances demand large expenditures, as an aristocrat he is also excluded from several professions. The only possibilities he can think of are among liberal professions such as writing, or teaching.

To start with, Rinaldo decides to embrace the first profession by writing a novel, considering it a very profitable genre. Like other novelists, Basso uses this episode to promote the social role of authors, while denouncing their weak position in the publishing world. Booksellers and critics ‘trovano tante contrarietà, e differenze’ in new works, ‘che ti costringono se hai bisogno, a vendere a prezzo miserabile, e vile un’opera, che forse ti averà costato tanti sudori’.³⁶ The complaints of novelists about their almost unbearable conditions and the tyranny of booksellers over them are very

36 Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 93.

common among other novelists too.³⁷ Complaints are caused by the deep change occurring to the writing profession during the century, and in particular the emergence in Venice of professional authors in the second half of the century.³⁸ Basso's novel in this sense offers a perfect description of the challenges and issues related to this transformation of the publishing market.³⁹ Although Rinaldo hopes to make a good amount of money from the novel, Neapolitan booksellers soon dash his hopes. Nobody wants to publish novels any more. The only entrepreneur interested in buying the manuscript ends up cheating him and pays Rinaldo almost nothing for the work.⁴⁰

Desperate, Rinaldo and Elisa leave Naples for Lyon: 'e quivi, giacchè non sapevo come più sostentarmi, mettermi ad insegnare il Francese, ed il Greco'.⁴¹ In the city, the couple lives in the house of a teacher, Erragosto, and his wife; while Rinaldo starts working with his landlord as a teacher of Italian and English. The episode may have an autobiographical basis: as already mentioned, Basso himself would live part of his life in Lyon as a teacher of Italian. Rinaldo's teaching experience is also a way

37 By way of an example, Chiari describes vividly the issues of earning a life from writing in the novel *Il Poeta* (1756), which has been often recognised by critics as a semi-autobiographic text. Both Marchesi and Ortolani for instance use it as a biographical source. See also a recent article by Cristina Cappelletti, 'Invenzione romanzesca e autobiografismo nel "Poeta" di Pietro Chiari', in *La sensibilità della ragione. Studi in omaggio a Franco Piva*, ed. by Laura Colombo and others (Verona: Fiorini, 2012), pp. 133–41.

38 The professionalization was caused by several factors: among others, the decline of traditional ways to support authors, first and foremost patronage; but also the widening of the reading public, in particular the non-specialised readers of *letteratura amena*. On this aspect see Crivelli, "*Né Arturo*", pp. 132–39. For a first overview see Ivo Mattozzi, 'Carlo Goldoni e la professione'; Cesare De Michelis, *Letterati e lettori nel Settecento veneziano* (Florence: Olschki, 1979); Claudio Colaiacomo, 'Crisi dell'*Ancien Régime*: dall'uomo di Lettere al letterato borghese', *Letteratura italiana* ed. by Alberto Asor Rosa, 5 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1983–86), II (1983): *Produzione e consumo*, pp. 363–412; Eugenio Di Rienzo, 'Intellettuali, editoria e mercato delle lettere in Italia nel Settecento', *Studi Storici*, 29 (1988), 103–126 (115–16); Paoli, *L'appannato specchio*, pp. 11–176.

39 The episode is also an example of meta-narrative: Rinaldo's novel is very similar to *L'avventuriere*, being a single volume 'diviso in dodici, e non più piccioli capi'. Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 94.

40 From this bookseller, Rinaldo receives an advance payment of two *cecchini*. The bookseller postpones the final payment of 12 *cecchini* to the next week. The following week, though, the man has disappeared. The novelist will never get his payment; and gives up the intention to maintain himself and Elisa by writing.

41 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 99.

for the author to promote his ideas about (formal) education. The successful pedagogy of the protagonist is inspired by a traditionalist view and stands at the opposite side of alternative forms of formal education promoted by other novelists. Rinaldo seems also to adapt to, and even appreciate, the bourgeois life he carries in Lyon. However, the positive experience – defined by the narrator ‘calma d’Affetti’⁴² – is suddenly interrupted by the appearance of D. Isabella. In this sense, the woman brings Rinaldo back to the awareness of his aristocratic status, reinforcing at the same time the aristocratic ideology of the novel.

The woman has escaped again from her brother, and once again has been able to track them down to Lyon. The return of the helper again changes the lives of Rinaldo and Elisa, who leave Lyon immediately after her. Isabella in this sense solves Rinaldo’s contradiction between status and wealth. Her intervention forces him to abandon the bourgeois life, and to get back to the social position of aristocrat.

Elisa, Isabella and Rinaldo move to Barcelona. Without financial concerns, the young protagonist is free to attend ‘le botteghe, dove erano soliti ragunarsi i Primati’,⁴³ fostering his intellectual interests. Thanks to his regained status, Rinaldo can therefore be again an intellectual; however, this time he is free from any financial concern. Interestingly enough, it is only now that he achieves fame and recognition. He writes a play for a company of French actors that becomes extremely successful. Success, however, makes Rinaldo enemies. The Duke F. D. publicly accuses Rinaldo of being ‘un critico ozioso’.⁴⁴ The Duke is also known for being ‘un uomo assai sulfureo, al quale non bisognava, per non muoverli la bile, contrariare cosa alcuna’.⁴⁵ After a few days, Rinaldo is summoned by the Governor of the city, and questioned:

42 Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 108.

43 Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 112.

44 Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 124.

45 Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 124.

ch'io mi fossi, mentre era molto tempo, che ero in Barcellona, con due Donne, senza far nota, a chi si aspetta, la mia estrazione. Senza confondermi, francamente risposi esser io chiamato R. D. I. Nativo di Firenze, di nobil famiglia, maritato con una di quelle du edonne, che avevo presso di me.⁴⁶

Rinaldo cleverly gives both true and false information. His ability to lie and mix truth and lies without any effort at this point signals that his educative path is probably coming to an end. After a few days, however, the Governor discovers the truth about Rinaldo and his *ménage à trois*. The officer forces him to make a choice. He should 'fare la scelta d'una delle due, prendendola, conforme si deve, per Moglie' and immediately leave Barcelona.⁴⁷ Otherwise, he will suffer horrible consequences. Rinaldo refuses to make a choice, and is taken to jail. He successfully escapes from the bleak prison and then, together with Elisa and D. Isabella, runs away from the city.

The journey proves fatal for D. Isabella. Her health declines, getting worse in Saragoza. One day, they meet by chance a servant of her brother. The man tells them that his master is dead. Isabella is now free, and the only heir of her family's estate. Her last wish is to come back to Genoa.

As soon as they arrive in Genoa though, Isabella dies. In a last, pathetic scene, she asks them to get married. 'Vi scongiuro, se voi pure, come lo spero, nudrite qualche amore per me, rendetemi in questo punto contenta, e fattemi, almeno negl'ultimi miei periodi [...] Ministra dei vostri contenti'.⁴⁸ At the deathbed of their friend, in the last page of the novel, Rinaldo and Elisa finally get married 'ad unirici una volta alla fine, con un nodo, che non ci scioglierà mai più fino alla Morte'.⁴⁹ D. Isabella leaves her estate to Rinaldo and Elisa. The triangle – the tension that

46 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 126.

47 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 125.

48 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 146.

49 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 146.

characterised the plot until that point – is finally resolved, and the protagonist ‘posto in calma dalla Fortuna’.⁵⁰

Ora in pace con Elisa men vivo, godendo i frutti, che la benefica mano di D.
Isabella ci ha donati, e ciocchè succederà dappoi, ne lascio agio di scrivere, a
chi prendere si vorrà la cura, che io intanto attendo a coltivare, come far
dovrebbero tutti, l’animo, or che ho tranquillato il cuore.⁵¹

The novel’s structure is similar to other narratives already considered: a young protagonist who disobeys the authority of a parental figure, runs away from home, and travels to different places having many adventures, during which the main character assumes different identities. At the end, he is able to marry the woman he had fallen in love with.

Despite such similarities however, the novel reflects a more conservative point of view. This is particularly evident in the representation of disobedience and education. In Chiari’s and Piazza’s novels, the protagonist’s disobedience was caused by the unruliness of parents, while extensive reading of *letteratura amena* was an aggravating factor. Rinaldo’s disobedience instead follows a different path. The protagonist’s uncle (and tutor), is an example of virtue who performs all parental duties with fairness and proportion. Before his act of disobedience, Rinaldo is not exposed to *letteratura amena*.⁵² Furthermore, his *cursus studiorum* is very traditional.⁵³

In fact, the novel suggests that individual weaknesses are the main cause of disobedience – in particular those associated with youth, such as inexperience, unrest, or recklessness. These elements are also present in other novels, and associated with

50 Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 147.

51 Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 147.

52 The only ‘unauthorized’ literature present in Rinaldo’s youth are the rhymes and sonnets he writes for Elisa.

53 He starts by getting ‘i primi principij della Grammatica’ of Latin language, and later moves to classical authors. Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 11. Elisa, on the other hand ‘frequentar doveva la scuola di una Vicina molto pratica ne’ lavori donneschi’, Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 12.

the protagonists' behaviour. However, they were never seen as the main cause of disobedience. Parents were responsible for the behaviour of their children.

It is significant that in *L'avventuriere*, fathers and mothers are almost invisible. Their role is replaced by relatives, siblings or even (in the case of Elisa) generous acquaintances.⁵⁴ The relationship between tutors and pupils takes over that between parents and children. This is a significant shift, as it moves the generational conflict from the domestic sphere inside the family, to a system of looser relationships located both within and outside the family. In this way, the novel avoids representing a negotiation of the parental authority seen in previous novels. The emotional charge related to parental roles is here replaced with a form of legal responsibility, and in this sense, forms a further element in the legal sub-theme already mentioned before. But the substitution may also have ideological causes. In the novel, parental authority remains legitimate because the narrative excludes any occasion for discussing it, and above all in the relationship of parents with disobedient children. On the other hand, as the authority of guardians is based on the legal system, it is easier to criticise the behaviour of individual tutors, without the risk of delegitimizing their role.

Guardianship was a legal instrument widely used in Venice and elsewhere. Such extensive use was caused by the limitation of individual independence. Unmarried young men, as well as (almost) all women, regardless of condition or age, were considered as in need of tutelage. A father was by law the primary guardian of his own family.⁵⁵ If he died, the law requested the appointment of a guardian. As Ferro points out:

54 The only parent with more than a token appearance is Zanetta's mother. Even in this case though, she never appears directly in the novel: the reader is informed about her by another character. Moreover, she is represented in the passive role of *mater dolorosa*, who died of sorrow for the misdeeds of her daughter.

55 'Il padre è il legittimo tutore dei figliuoli o nipoti da questi emancipati, e morendo il padre, passa la loro tutela al figliolo in perfetta età, il quale diventa tutore fiduciario degli altri fratelli pupilli'. Ferro, *Dizionario*, II, 379.

È cosa egualmente interessante per la religione e per la politica, che quelli i quali rimangono privi di padre, prima di essere arrivati all'età in cui possono regolar se medesimi, sieno posti sotto la direzione di qualche persona che tenga luogo del padre, e che sia incaricata della loro educazione, e della custodia dei loro beni.⁵⁶

Guardians were expected to provide education for pupils, and manage their estate. From this point of view, the novel presents two opposing models of tutor. Rinaldo and Elisa's tutor is a positive model; while Isabella's brother, D. Raimondo Raina, represents its opposite.

In the same period, Venetian playwrights also exploited the relationship between guardians and pupils. A positive figure of the tutor is the virtuous Pantalone in Carlo Goldoni's comedy *Il tutore*.⁵⁷ Introducing the play to his readers, Goldoni explained the choice of this character in this way:

Ecco dunque [...] il mio Tutore, attento, puntuale, fedele, dalla di cui onoratezza, sollecitudine, e zelo, potranno apprendere quelli, che assunto hanno un tal carico, quale sia il dover loro, quale impegno si debban prendere, non solo negl'interessi de' Pupilli ma nell'onore di essi, e nella di loro più convenevole educazione.⁵⁸

Goldoni's purpose therefore was to show the triumph of virtue: 'esaltarla, premiarla, innamorare gli spettatori di essa, e darle poscia maggior risalto col confronto dei vizj, e delle loro pessime conseguenze'.⁵⁹ He confesses to have chosen such a character without considering the public's expectations: 'si aspettavano quasi tutti vedere rappresentato un Tutore infedele, il quale dilapidando con tradimento le

56 Ferro, *Dizionario*, II, 815–16.

57 The comedy was published for the first time in 1753, then in the second volume of the Pasquali edition, *Il tutore* in Carlo Goldoni, *Delle commedie di Carlo Goldoni avvocato veneziano*, 10 vols (Venice: Pasquali, 1761), II, 161–237. Chiari's *La donna di spirito* (1754) also centres on the relationship between an old guardian and his young pupil. The comedy was included in the ninth volume of *Commedie in versi*.

58 Goldoni, *Il tutore*, 167.

59 Goldoni, *Il tutore*, 167.

sostanze de' suoi Pupilli, scoprisse le ruberie de' suoi pari, e ne seguisse il castigo'.⁶⁰

The misbehaviour of guardians or their ineptitude after all is recalled by contemporaries,⁶¹ and has a long tradition as a negative stereotype.⁶² D. Raimondo perfectly embodies the abuses of guardianship. He is driven by economic profit, and does not care for the well-being of D. Isabella. Furthermore, he exerts his power over Isabella with brutality, and violence. In this sense, his death is a perfect example of *vice puni*. The stress of knowing that Rinaldo had escaped his plots, and his sister was again on the run, has caused him a violent and sudden illness that kills him almost instantly:

fu preso di nuovo, ma con maggior forza, dalla sua bile, che li cagionò una Febbre così ardente, che quando meno se la pensava, fu obbligato morire, senza far Testamento, avendo solo sempre in bocca il nome di D. Isabella. Restammo molto soddisfatti ad un simile racconto, ed ebbe più volte D. Isabella a ringraziare il Cielo per avere così bene punito un Fratello, che era sitibondo del suo, e mio Sangue.⁶³

D. Isabella's flight is therefore justified by the cruelty of her brother and tutor, and in this sense, the novel might recall a causality already found in other novels.⁶⁴ As

60 Goldoni, *Il tutore*, 166.

61 Only to make an example, Chiari in *Lettere scelte* includes guardians in a satirical passage: 'Gli anni in cui [...] ad un Finanziere riveduto il libro maestro de' conti; ad un Grande mandato a fuoco il palazzo; ad un Avvocato tolto un ricco cliente; ad un Tutore levato dalle mani il pupillo; ad una vedova limitata l'amministrazione economica delle sue rendite; ad un Ortolano tempestate la vigna; ad una Frine defraudata la paga; anni, e giorni son eglino critici, e climaterici tanto, che segnarsi ponno con un carbone tolto dal focolajo della cucina di Pluto'. Pietro Chiari, *Lettere scelte di varie materie piacevoli, critiche ed erudite, scritte ad una dama di qualità*, 3 vols (Venice: Pasinelli, 1751–53), II, 9.

62 See for an example the *Discorso LVII*, 'De' Tutori' in Tomaso Garzoni, *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* (1585), ed. by Paolo Cherchi and Beatrice Collina, 2 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), II, 823–25.

63 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, pp. 138–139.

64 Besides, such freedom did not grant them full responsibility over other individuals, namely, their orphaned children. The novel gives a good example of this system: Elisa passes under the supervision of Rinaldo's uncle, even though her mother is still alive. A very similar situation is also in Goldoni's *Il tutore*. Rosaura has two guardians, even though she still lives with her mother. Incidentally, her mother's unruly behaviour as a widow is one of the main concerns of Rosaura's guardian Pantalone.

quoted above, the cruelty and selfishness of Raimondo are so deep as to make one forget any Christian piety to his sister or Rinaldo.⁶⁵

Isabella's freedom of movement (when she is not under her brother's control) is rather a reflection of her being a widow. Widowhood was a time of relative independence for women. Its main limitation was the lack of money, as the husband's estate went back to his family.⁶⁶ In this sense – and in contradiction with being under tutelage – D. Isabella's acts are those of an independent woman. The main grounds of her independence, however, lie in her wealth. She is able to maintain the group of people who accompany Rinaldo. After her second escape, she will do the same supporting their life in Spain. Isabella's character therefore embodies two very different (and opposite) conditions: on the one hand, as a pupil under tutelage she is subject to the authority of her brother; on the other, when she is able to escape from him, she acts independently, with a freedom similar to that enjoyed by widows. In both cases, money plays a pivotal role as the main source of independence. At the same time, Isabella's independent approach to managing money is the main reason for her brother's harassment.

If Isabella's disobedient attitude against her brother is justified (and caused) by the latter's greed and brutality, that of Rinaldo has different causes. His tutor is a 'Padre comune', 'saggio e prudente'. As the narrator himself points out (in a quite convoluted way):

65 By law, the husband's wealth had to be given back to his relatives, once they repaid the widow of her original dowry. See Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, 'Matrimonio, vedovanza e divorzio', in *Storia della famiglia in Europa*, ed. by Marzio Barbagli and David I. Kertzer, 3 vols (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2001), I, 307–51 (p. 338).

66 Ferro, *Dizionario*, II, pp. 835–36. See also Thomas Kuehn, 'Figlie, madri, mogli e vedove. Donne come persone giuridiche', in *Tempi e spazi di vita femminile tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. by Silvana Seidel Menchi, Anne Jacobson Schutte, and Thomas Kuhne (Bologna: Mulino, 1999), pp. 431–60 (pp. 449–57). Kuhne's article centres on the Renaissance, but many observations can be easily applied to the eighteenth century, in Venice and elsewhere.

Non faccio, come far sogliono alcuni, malevadrice delle mie disgrazie la mia cattiva Fortuna; ma da me stesso mi accuso, essendo io solo stato, sé pur così posso dire, e non attribuirlo più tosto alla cattiva educazione, che mi fu data, da chi era mio Direttore, il Fabbro di tutte quelle vicende, che mi convenne soffrire nel progresso della mia vita.⁶⁷

Rinaldo's disobedience is caused by individual weaknesses. An impulsive decision against a rightful order: the prohibition of an illegitimate and dangerous relationship imposed by his uncle. The main resistance comes from Elisa's different social status. The distance from other novels is here plainly declared by the narrator, who openly criticises the habit of linking disobedient behaviours with the educative mistakes made by legitimate parental figures. Since the beginning *L'avventuriere* presents an alternative (and a traditionalist one) way to interpret the causes of disobedience.

The narrator presents Rinaldo's rebellion as caused by passion and a restlessness typical of young people. In this way, the full responsibility of disobedient actions falls into Rinaldo's hands, while nobody else is to blame. Before and after his escape, however, Rinaldo is always capable of controlling the 'violenti trasporti' towards Elisa until the end of their adventures. The narrator's (and the novel's) aim is precisely to show a virtuous example of self-control. As Rinaldo points out:

con il mio proprio esempio, e con quello di moltissimi altri, io dovrei qui tacere, ma pure dirò, che qualora l'uomo del suo onor si rammenta, non è reso schiavo dalla passione, se non se dei taciti affetti del cuore.⁶⁸

In the first chapter, the narrator had presented a very similar argument:

Non ha parte alcuna la Sorte, laddove la Passione combatte; e stolto farebbe colui, che accusasse la Fortuna d'ingrata, quando d'ogni sua traversia i propri vizj ne fon la cagione. Io non scrivo queste memorie per ambizion di passar

⁶⁷ Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 6.

⁶⁸ Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 17.

per Autore [...] ma giacché volle il Cielo farmi giuoco della Fortuna, voglio almeno l'onore di ammaestrare a mio proprio conto tutti coloro che avranno la tolleranza di leggere queste memorie.⁶⁹

In this way, the author is able to offer Rinaldo's adventures as an example of virtue, even though this virtuous behaviour is actually performed on a disobedient path. In other words, Rinaldo disobeys his tutor, but he is strong enough to remain virtuous. Rinaldo's invisible virtue generates a conflict with social judgement: what society sees, and the real nature of his relationship. The conflict emerges several times during the narrative.⁷⁰

Despite the narrator's claims however, passion and love tend to disappear from Rinaldo's perspective as soon as he leaves home. The disappearance of romantic love is exemplified in the episode of the premarital agreement made in Venice. The only way to legitimize Elisa's position would be a marriage, but Rinaldo resists the idea.⁷¹ His main argument is the need for independence. His words have nothing to do with romantic love:

non volevo così presto perdere la mia libertà, e soggettarmi alla cura de' Figli, se venuti ne fossero. Avevo fin da quel tempo preso molto piacer per il viaggio, onde riflettendo, che un Uomo conjugato non poteva a' suo talento,

69 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 6. Incidentally, the passage sounds contradictory: at first the narrator denies the existence of 'Fortuna ingrata', then immediately after he mentions he has been the victim of a 'giuoco della Fortuna'.

70 When he comes back to Florence for the first time he says: 'Alla fine ero un'Uomo, e non dovevo lasciarmi far paura dalle apparenze', Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 72. In another episode, knowing that a young gentleman is looking for him, Rinaldo reflects about the two main risks of being discovered: 'delitto sarebbe stato per me l'essere al Mondo scoperto con un nome supposto, e con due Donne, che nulla mi appartenevano', Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 55. He is equally worried about the opinion of the world about him 'così giudicato il Mondo non avrebbe, ed il mio onore prendere una macchia, che tutte le mie proteste, e difese, non sarebbero capaci di cancellargliela'. Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 55.

71 The negative answer to Rinaldo is partially resolved by another request made by Elisa. Rather than a true marriage, she asks him to sign a contract: 'bramava vedere legalizzate le mie promesse per mano di un pubblico Palazzista', Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 44. 'Palazzista' stands for 'Nome che comprende Causidici e tutti quelli che hanno ministero nel palazzo della ragione, cioè presso i tribunali', Giuseppe Boerio, *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano* (Venice: Santini, 1829), p. 791. Rinaldo agrees to her request. Nonetheless, he also points out to the reader that it would be very easy to challenge such a contract. He uses it to calm Elisa's jealousy and fears, and does not see it as a boundary.

goder di que' piacer, che ad un libero permessi veniano, mi rincresceva
assaiissimo così presto far schiava la libera mia volontà, ad una passione.⁷²

From his point of view, marriage is a burden that limits his aspirations, especially after he discovers the pleasures of travelling and – above all – not being under the control of an adult. More generally, he is not ready to take responsibilities.⁷³ In this sense, the protagonist's ideas mirror his immaturity. He is still at the beginning of his *Bildung*, and will need time (and adventures) to become an adult and responsible person.

Rinaldo also shows ambivalent feelings towards Elisa and D. Isabella. He is the first to recognise that his love has rapidly changed:

presa avendo io un poco di aria di Mondo, non avevo più que' sentimenti,
che fra le domestiche pareti nutrivo [...] volevo ancora godere per un poco di
mia libertà, e poscia seco mi stringerei con indissolubile nodo.⁷⁴

In Rinaldo's choices, honour and profit suddenly take the place of romantic love. The renewed importance of these two elements can be seen in Rinaldo's decision to come back to Florence to claim his uncle's inheritance. In a long passage, Rinaldo thinks about all the *pro et contra* of such a decision. In favour of his trip is 'il bisogno' and 'il dovere'.⁷⁵ He cannot continue to borrow money from D. Isabella; the inheritance would help him to settle down. 'Il dovere' towards his late relative and family is also important: 'avrebbero i miei parenti gridato, se ritornato non fossi'.⁷⁶

72 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 44.

73 This perspective on marriage – defined as 'il peso del matrimonio' – can be found among Venetian aristocratic families in relation to the son in charge of marrying and inheriting the family's estate. See Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano*, pp. 306–308. Rinaldo will be forced to take up his responsibilities later, in Naples and Lyon, working as novelist and teacher.

74 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, pp. 43–44. The indecision between the two women emerges several times during the novel. Romantic love is never mentioned. The two women are linked to different feelings: gratitude and courtesy (Isabella) opposed to honour and the need to keep his word (Elisa).

75 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 71.

76 Three reasons for not leaving on the other hand are 'l'amore', 'il rossore' and 'il timore'. Affection for Isabella and Elisa, shame (rossore) to return to his own city 'alla quale con la mia fuga avevo dato motivo di dubitare di me a moltissimi'. Furthermore, he is afraid (timore) of his

Rinaldo faces the same clash between honour and profit in the lawsuit filed by Isabella's brother. To save her honour, Rinaldo should accept the version given by D. Raimondo, and avoid telling the truth about her escape. On the other hand, only the truth could give him a chance to save part of the estate he should inherit. In fact, the choice between the two in this case is only apparent: the truth would further complicate his honourability, revealing the ambiguous *ménage* they were having in Naples. Once again, social appearances become the third (disruptive) element in Rinaldo's decisions.

Finally, the conflict between honour and profit becomes evident when Rinaldo's social position is at stake. As mentioned before,⁷⁷ career choices for young aristocrats like Rinaldo were limited. Their status forbade the practice of any kind of *ars mechanica*, including trade.⁷⁸ In this sense, the text displays a paradoxical clash between status and wealth, already seen in previous novels. The last resort for Rinaldo is to make use of his knowledge by undertaking an intellectual profession. Through this, Basso also suggests an affinity between the situation of a young aristocrat without financial means, and an author (regardless of his social status) who tries to earn a living from intellectual work. A comment made by Rinaldo, finding himself in Naples without money, exemplifies the terms of this similarity:

Chi viaggia il Mondo, si trova esposto mai sempre a stravaganze molto bizzarre. Se ricco, e dovizioso mostra di farsi credere, è soggetto a mille inconvenienti, ed affanni; se d'una condizione mediocre, non si distingue nel Mondo, né li è permesso esser a parte di que' piaceri, che brama, chi viaggia, se povero, e miserabile non li è permesso di far uso di quel talento, di cui fu

uncle, who might force him to stay in Florence. See Basso, *L'avventuriere*, pp. 71–72.

77 See for instance the career of D'Arville as Signor Ricciard in *La filosofessa*, analysed in chapter 3.

78 This rule was not absolute. Members of the aristocracy were able to participate in trade and businesses, usually as 'capitalists'. Enterprises were recorded by a non-aristocratic figurehead, who might or might not have an executive function in the business. On *Capitalisti* in the Venetian book world, see Mario Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, pp. 144–83. This freedom though was limited to those who had money to invest in such enterprises. Young aristocrats without money, like Rinaldo in Naples and Lyon, were therefore excluded.

dotato dal Cielo, imperocché misurando tutti con l'esterne apparenze, quel che ha di più bello, è sforzata dalla sua ingrata fortuna tenere agl'occhi di tutti nascosto, stimandosi l'ascoltarlo superfluo, ed altrettanto imposture le sue parole.⁷⁹

The metaphor of travellers is used to criticise the construction of social identity based on wealth and appearance. Talented individuals should be able to profit from their talents, but often this is not possible. Rinaldo soon discovers that despite his talent, a career as a professional author is difficult or impossible to achieve.⁸⁰ His work is valued at a tenth of what he was expecting,⁸¹ demonstrating the impossibility of professional writing.

One of the most interesting aspects of this episode is the parallel drawn by Basso between a young aristocrat without financial resources, and professional authors. It can be seen as an attempt to ennoble the status of the intellectual, by attributing to this figure a sort of aristocracy based on talents. This way of seeing intellectuals also implies the idea – frequently repeated by enlightened thinkers – that talent should be enough to get an individual to a higher social condition. As already pointed out, this was a common thought among aristocrats with no fortune in Venice. In this sense, the social mobility implied in this idea does not challenge the conservative ideology fostered by Basso. Mobility is still impossible to achieve from one class to the other, but it is partially allowed within the aristocracy – typically

79 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 90.

80 Rinaldo's decision to become an author is carefully considered for its economic potential. The protagonist is very pragmatic in his decision: as a successful genre, the novel represents a good asset ('credendo di possedere un Capitale', Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 95). Similar opinions are those expressed by Gasparo Gozzi in his *Lettere diverse*. See Bartolo Anglani, 'Le lettere diverse ovvero il pubblico come ipotesi' in *Gasparo Gozzi: il lavoro di un intellettuale nel Settecento veneziano*, ed. by Ilaria Crotti and Ricciarda Ricorda (Padua: Antenore, 1989), pp. 245–59. Gasparo's experience in several aspects recalls a situation similar to that of Rinaldo in *L'avventuriere*.

81 'Non era mal fondato il mio pensiero, se pagasse il Mondo, come si conviene, le fatiche de' Letterati, ma malamente ora vive, chi viver spera di penna. Non pagano le fatiche, come una volta a caro prezzo', Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 92.

expressed by the conflict between wealth and status – as well as for intellectuals, who represent themselves as an ‘aristocracy of letters’.

The end of Rinaldo’s experience as a teacher in Lyon is a good example of the limits of social mobility. The unsuitability of the bourgeois life carried out in France is inscribed in Rinaldo’s original aristocratic status. He seems well aware of it: ‘sebbene riguardo al mio stato m’ero ridotto a una vil condizione, nulla ostante contentandomi della mia fortuna, mi stimavo felice, e questo bastava perché lo fossi’.⁸² The changed position should not be praised: it is rather the fact that everyone should accept his or her position in the world: ‘felice appieno può chiamarsi colui, che del suo stato è contento, perocchè viddi per esperienza, che le ricchezze, e l’Oro non fanno partorire, che cure moleste, e affanni noiosi’.⁸³

In this sense, D. Isabella brings Rinaldo back to his original status. Seeing him teaching, she laughs out loud.⁸⁴ From her perspective Rinaldo’s profession is unthinkable. She does not even have to explain the reason: at the end of the class, she simply says that was his last day as a teacher.

In fact, Rinaldo does not take up a position against this decision. He leaves all earnings from the language classes to his colleague Erragosto, partly as compensation for abandoning his job without notice. This unexpected generosity is related to the increased awareness of his own class position caused by Isabella’s appearance. As an aristocrat, Rinaldo should not work for a living. Although the positive aspects of a bourgeois life are shown, this never becomes a realistic opportunity for the nobleman. The final message is that everyone should keep his own place in society.

82 Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 107.

83 Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 106. It is interesting that the outcast Corradino in *I zingani* will express exactly the opposite idea.

84 ‘[E]bbe molto a ridere vedendomi la mattina seguente montare in Cattedra’, Basso, *L’avventuriere*, p. 106

The main element of discontinuity with a conservative mentality happens only at the end of the novel, with the marriage between Rinaldo and Elisa, who is not an aristocrat. The marriage however solves the opposition honour vs profit. Rinaldo and Elisa are financially independent, as they have inherited D. Isabella's estate. Rinaldo's honourability is finally protected by this wealth, as is Elisa (who is named heir together with her lover). The last words of the novel recall those of Piazza's *L'omicida*: 'Ora in pace con Elisa men vivo, godendo i frutti, che la benefica mano di D. Isabella ci ha donati [...] io [...] attendo a coltivare, come far dovrebbero tutti, l'animo, or che ho tranquillato il cuore'.⁸⁵ The final words of an individual who has accepted his role and position in society, and who can manage and control his feelings and desires.

His *Bildung*, the maturation from inexperienced young man to adult, is completed. Nonetheless, it is difficult to see Rinaldo as an example of virtue. Possibly because of the author's inexperience, he does remain a 'weak' protagonist. In this sense, the lack of coherence undermines the didactic purpose of the novel, as declared at the beginning, to show virtue rewarded. On the other hand, the novel's contradictions are worthy of analysis. The society described and promoted by Basso is still an aristocratic one. At the same time, its surface is wrinkled with changes and tensions that characterise the narrative of those years.

Similar changes can be found in *I zingani*. Piazza's novel seems to be an image of Basso's in a distorting mirror, but also has something in common with it. The aristocratic mentality, and its contradictions, are still there. But the *exemplum* in charge of proving its legitimacy this time is an antihero, Corradino. His ideas are for the most part the opposite of those expressed in Basso's novel. The result is a

85 Basso, *L'avventuriere*, p. 147.

compelling narrative that challenges the reader in different ways, and a new experiment (this time successful), with the novel as didactic instrument.

The revolt of exempla: Piazza's I zingani

Antonio Piazza's *I zingani: storiella piacevole* was published in 1769. The book was recorded in the *mandati* by printer Pietro Savioni.⁸⁶ The following novel, *Il romito*, which, as Morace points out, belongs to the same publishing plan as *I zingani*,⁸⁷ was instead recorded by Angelo Pasinelli. It was typical of Piazza's publishing habits in those years. It is impossible to say if the novel was financed by Savioni himself, or rather printed at the expense of the author. Moreover, unlike other works, *I zingani* has no dedication. The raunchy content might have prompted Piazza to avoid this step.

The novel brings the theme of disobedience to its extremes, by displaying a 'Faustian' couple of young men and their descent into depravation, sin, and crime. Compared to *L'omicida*, the style of *I zingani* is dramatically different. Digressions are limited, resulting in a quicker narrative pace. This also includes elements which were typical of Piazza's didacticism in *L'omicida*: explanatory and informative passages almost disappear.⁸⁸ This is also a result of the position of the narrator, who

86 N. 83, 6 Aug 1769, rev. Martinengo, *corr.* L'Autore. ASV, *Arti*, 342. Starting from 1768, the *mandati* record the name of the person in charge of proofreading the work. This was part of a strategy aimed at improving the quality of Venetian book production, fostered by Gasparo Gozzi. See Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, pp. 187–88 and pp. 294–308. Marchesi attributed the publishing to Angelo Geremia, possibly following an *avviso* signed by this bookseller attached to some exemplars of the novel. For other editions see Crivelli, "*Né Arturo*", pp. 318–19; Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 308. A modern edition, unreliable and missing several parts, is *I zingani*, ed. by Alberto Consiglio (Rome: Edizioni moderne Canesi, 1960).

87 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, pp. 77–78. The entire chapter 'Il dittico in apogeo' (pp. 77–134) in Morace's book is dedicated to the analysis of *I zingani* and *Il romito*.

88 Morace argues that the novel represents a transformation of Piazza's novelistic production. In the scholar's opinion, the writer was getting rid of the influence of Chiari's novels. Evidence for this can be found in the simplification of the plot; the decreased importance of adventure and fantasy tropes, and a more intense psychological description of characters, Morace, *Il prisma*

does not correspond to the protagonist of the novel. The narrator's interventions are not frequent, or evident. Some passages – usually criticism expressed by one of the protagonists – are commented indirectly but in a very visible way by using footnotes.⁸⁹

The novel is influenced by different genres. Existing scholarship has usually analysed the relationship of *I zingani* with the tradition of Italian novellas, and with the picaresque novel. Marchesi for instance wrote: 'c'è la scurrilità dei nostri novellieri, in questo romanzo, e la civetteria francese e l'avventurosa ribalderia dei picari spagnuoli'.⁹⁰ As I will argue, some features in this novel are borrowed directly from criminal biographies, a genre which had appeared in Venice in the 1750s. Morace analyses the relationship with the Spanish sixteenth century novels *Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*⁹¹ and Lesage's *Gil Blas de Santillane*.⁹² Among others, the closest similarity can be found in the role attributed to the *picaroon* in unveiling the truth about society.⁹³ The function attributed to this 'merry rogue' has been defined by Mikhail Bakhtin as '*gay deception*':

Opposed to the *lie of pathos* accumulated in the language of all recognized and structured professions, social groups and classes, there is not straightforward truth (pathos of the same kind) but rather a gay and intelligent deception, a *lie* justified because it is directed precisely to *liars*.⁹⁴

dell'apparenza, pp. 81–82.

89 Marchesi argued that footnotes helped the novel to pass the censorship. See Marchesi, *Studi e ricerche*, p. 156.

90 Marchesi, *Studi e ricerche*, p. 153. Folco Portinari defines the novel 'un rarissimo esempio di picaresco italiano con ascendenze più generiche che specifiche', in the introduction to *Romanzieri del Settecento* (Turin: UTET, 1988), p. 57. Morace refers to the Decameron's novelistic tradition, for instance Corradino's jests which are similar to those made by 'frate Cipolla contro i semplici', Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 99.

91 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 94.

92 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 82.

93 On picaresque European literature and its relationship with deviance and crime see Alexander A. Parker, *Literature and the Delinquent. The Picaresque Novel in Spain and Europe (1599-1753)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967).

94 Mikhail Mikhailovic Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 401.

Corradino, one of the two protagonists, embodies this function in the novel. In one of his tirades, for instance, he explains ‘Che impostura? Che frode? Tutto sulla terra è frode, e impostura, e dal più vile Artigiano al Maggiore de’ Mortali estendono il loro dominio queste tiranne dell’uman genere’.⁹⁵ After each episode of deception or crime, Corradino explains to his partner the logic of their deeds: their victims deserve a punishment, for what they have done, and for their lies.

Corradino’s actions also have traits typical of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque, by way of ‘making public all unofficial and forbidden spheres of human life, in particular the sphere of the sexual and of vital body functions (copulation, food, wine)’, as Bakhtin described it.⁹⁶ This aspect might be informed from the tradition of Italian novellas, still widely diffused in the eighteenth-century.⁹⁷

Criminal biographies stand as a third stream of influence for *I zingani*. The narrator acknowledges it in the last pages of the novel: ‘Non mancherà chi l’accusi d’essersi affaticato intorno un argomento che non meritava la stampa, come non la meritavano le vite d’un *Totleben*, d’un *Cartoccio*, d’un *Mandrino*’.⁹⁸ Not surprisingly, this quotation is inserted in the final defence of the novel, against those who will attack its theme as unworthy. The three works mentioned had all been published in Venice in recent years. In particular, Piazza’s novel appears closely related to the lives of Louis Dominique Garthausen known as Cartouche (1693-1721), and Louis Mandrin (1725-1755). They were two French criminals active in the eighteenth century. Their adventures had an enormous success in several European

95 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 20.

96 Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 165–66.

97 See for instance the anonymous short novel *Vita di Giannetto caffettiere* (Venice: [n. pub.], 1746). The novel is written in an archaic language modelled on that of traditional novellas. It tells the story of Giannetto, a champion of laziness and gluttony. The work has been attributed to Bartolomeo Piantoni, a member of the Granelleschi. See Paolo Bosisio, *Carlo Gozzi e Goldoni: una polemica letteraria con versi inediti e rari* (Florence: Olschki, 1979), p. 410.

98 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 123.

countries. Their biographies and those of some of their partners in crime were translated into Italian and published in Venice.⁹⁹

I zingani and in particular the character of Corradino, have two elements in common with these works. First, the construction of the protagonist's criminal career is common to almost all criminal biographies. In these texts, the culprit follows a gradual path that goes from rather forgivable sins, to extremely violent behaviour that ends up in murder. Narratives always end up with the death of the criminal, which happens after confessing her or his crimes (especially in the English tradition). Second, the purpose of showing the rightful punishment of sinners and criminals to readers is explicitly or implicitly present in all criminal narratives.¹⁰⁰ The overlapping of criminals and sinners is not fortuitous. The construction of criminal characters, and Corradino is no exception, is built around an ideological framework in which religious, moral and legal judgements tend to overlap. In these narratives the criminal is first of all a sinner and a person with scarce or no morality. This is a common pattern in English and French criminal biographies of the eighteenth century, but can be easily applied to Piazza's construction of Corradino's character.

If Corradino's story follows a rhetoric similar to criminal biographies, the second protagonist of the novel, Celino, takes a different direction. A young aristocrat seduced by Corradino, he follows a learning process that recalls that of other novels.

99 *Istoria della Vita, e Processo fatto in Parigi del famoso Ladro Luigi Domenico Cartoccio* (Venice: [Geremia?], 1724); *Storia della Vita, e Processo fatto i Mastrich Frontiera d'Olanda, de' due famosi Ladri Pietro Vandenech, e Valentino Colenz Principali Agenti del gran Capo Ladro Cartoccio, con le Costituzioni statuite dal medesimo per il mantenimento della sua esecrabile Società* (Venice: [Geremia?], 1725). After two decades, the uproar for the arrest and execution of Louis Mandrin generated a new series of publications: *Storia di Luigi Mandrino celebre contrabbandiere di Francia, e suo Processo ultimamente seguito in Valenza* (Venice: Fenzo, 1758), translated by Pietro Chiari. The previous year there is a record in the *Mandati* on behalf again of Modesto Fenzo for a reprint of Cartouche's biography.

100 A useful study on the typology and rhetoric of criminal biographies is Lincoln B. Faller's *Turned to Account. The Forms and Functions of Criminal Biography in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Faller's main argument is that criminal biographies were built around myths to fulfil specific social and political functions.

Celino's education is much harder, and more complex, than that of other protagonists considered before. An evil teacher guides him. Nonetheless, he slowly grows a conscience. At the end, he does not share the same horrible fate as his friend. In fact, his full repentance and redemption will be told in the second novel of the series, *Il romito*.¹⁰¹

The novel begins with a geographical description of Corradino's birthplace, in the Kingdom of Naples, near the monastery of Monte Cassino.¹⁰² The idyllic description of Cassino's surroundings ends abruptly in front of a 'misero tugurio', home of Corradino Anello. The reader is informed that Corradino traces his line of descent from Tommaso Aniello, also known as Masaniello d'Amalfi, the leader of the Neapolitan popular revolt in 1674.¹⁰³ Corradino lost his parents when he was still young, and has been living alone in his house since then.

Admiring his perspicacity and manual skills, the superior of the nearby monastery offers him a place as a student and novice. Corradino accepts, but his conduct soon becomes an issue. He spends his time inventing new ways to make fun of the monks. These mockeries are the first step in the villainous path of this character. His actions begin as innocent jokes. Then, they become increasingly serious, and morally and socially questionable. In the last episode, he makes fun of a couple of aristocrats. The episode also introduces one of the main faults of Corradino: his attacks against social hierarchy and conventions. The superior has Corradino arrested, and the young man remains in captivity for one year. Detention brings to the surface other negative aspects of his nature, which help in identifying him as a sinner:

101 Morace sees Celino as 'un personaggio in divenire, educato dal corso della vita e dell'azione, in una parole un eroe mediocre da *Bildungsroman*, sottoposto infatti a chiaroscuri psicologici ed a ripiegamenti interiori che non sono di Corradino', Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 89.

102 The description recalls contemporary geographical works that included detailed historical information about it. In Flavio della Marra, *Descrizione istorica del monastero di Monte Casino* (Naples: [n.pub.], 1751), p. 35, it is mentioned a 'Borgo, detto degli Zingari' from where begins the main road to the monastery.

103 Piazza, *I zingani*, pp. 2–3.

‘Bestemmie di nuova invenzione’; ‘urla da spiritato’, and ‘imprecazioni da demonio’.¹⁰⁴ At the end of his imprisonment, Corradino is expelled from the convent. The superior forbids him to come back, afraid of the young man’s terrible threats.

Corradino goes back to his previous solitary life. One day however, near the *romitorio dell’Incoronata*, a hermitage held by the Camaldolese order, he spots a boy following a monk. The delicate features of Celino stir Corradino’s suspicions. He starts suspecting that the boy is in fact a young lady in disguise and decides to seduce her. After a day spent together, both drunk, they finally lie together in bed. ‘Si coricarono come due porci nel fango’,¹⁰⁵ but when finally Corradino makes his final approach, ‘un certo incontro capire distintamente gli fece che mentito non era il vestito di Celino’.¹⁰⁶

This discovery ends the first part of the narrative. The final act of Celino’s seduction however will only happen the next day. In order to ‘seduce’ the boy, Corradino makes a long speech. He convinces the other to ask his family for as much money as possible, and then run away together. This is the first ‘lesson’ given to Celino. Corradino’s seductive speech is composed of several parts. First, he arouses Celino’s curiosity, and desire for adventure: ‘vuoi vedere questo gran Mondo di cui siamo noi, due incogniti abitatori marciti nell’ozio d’una solitudine oscura? Vuoi godere di tutti i beni della vita?’.¹⁰⁷ Second, he plans the way in which Celino will extort money from his mother and uncle. Third, he presents their plans for the future: they will escape to Naples. Dressed as gypsies, they will travel the world as fortune-tellers and charlatans. The representation of different types of professions performed in the streets is a *leit-motif* of the novel.¹⁰⁸

104 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 10.

105 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 17.

106 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 17.

107 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 17–18.

108 A long list of astrological, magical and alchemical terms supports his tirade. Corradino

This first meeting between Celino and Corradino outlines two elements that characterise their future relationship. In particular, the misunderstanding about the former's gender identity which will be from then on used as a device to attract their victims.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the relationship of domination-subjugation which recalls that between teacher and pupil. It will not change until the end of the novel.

Celino follows Corradino's plan, and with the money stolen from his family, they move to Naples. From there, dressed as gypsies, they start their journey to Rome. It is interesting to note that from this moment both men become seducers. Celino, 'vestito da donna, innamorava a guardarlo' while Corradino uses his words to achieve similar results. In this first part of their travel, their victims are mainly peasants: 'le contadine più misere godevano di farsi astrologare da quella finta Donna e restavano contente, dandole quanto permetteva il loro stato'.¹¹⁰

Wanting to visit Rome, the two decide to dress up as clergymen. Once in the city, Celino attracts a rich gentleman of high rank 'di cui tacere bisogno il nome, il carattere, il grado'.¹¹¹ The nobleman presumes Celino is a woman, and invites both protagonists to his house, giving them money. One night, the old man approaches the 'lady', and finally Celino reveals his true identity.¹¹² The old man's last words still retain a sexual undertone: 'va là bricconcello, soggiunse l'Amante schernito. Per rifarmi vorrei essere dilette...'.¹¹³

The couple abandon the city. Back at the inn where they had changed their dresses, they are confronted by the Jew who had sold them their religious clothing on

acknowledges that they are all based on falseness and nobody should believe in them. However, he also recognises that a large proportion of people is still gullible, and therefore deserves the fraud.

109 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 19. Celino's appearances will attract admirers and lovers eager to give them money, and presents.

110 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 22.

111 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 24.

112 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 25.

113 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 25.

arrival. The man is aware of the fraud at the expenses of the rich nobleman, and tries to blackmail the two culprits, and get back the sum that they had extorted from their victim. On this occasion, Corradino's violent nature emerges for the second time. He beats both the Jew and a friend of his, leaving both almost dead.

It is at this point that, for the first time, Celino shows some remorse for their actions. Corradino's eloquence, however, convinces him of the contrary. The journey from Rome to Florence is spent in joyful, mindless activities and new frauds. After Corradino's speech, Celino abandons himself to corruption. Using his female identity, he approaches several women to seduce and violate them.¹¹⁴ On the outskirts of Florence, the couple exchange once more their costumes with two Neapolitan pilgrims they meet by chance. Immediately after the change of clothes a constable arrives accompanied by a group of soldiers, who arrest the two pilgrims, now dressed as gypsies. The constable has been sent on behalf of Celino's mother to arrest his son's seducer, and bring both home. This is also the first of many episodes of good luck that will help them during their adventures. In Florence the couple faces another problem. People are now unsure about the identity of Celino: many suspect he might be a man in disguise. At this point, Corradino teaches his partner the proper way to be a woman.¹¹⁵ This is mandatory, as 'il capitale più lucroso della loro furberia era quella finzione, ed iscemandosi, o mancando, la sarebbe stata una gran disgrazia per loro'.¹¹⁶

The first man met in Florence is a lame person who falls in love with Celino.¹¹⁷ Despite being unsuccessful, he boasts to everyone about his alleged conquest. One of

114 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 30.

115 Corradino's speech is also a satirical attack against contemporary habits.

116 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 36.

117 This may be a satirical portrait of a real person. The description is extremely precise – more than other characters in the novel, and certainly more than a secondary character would usually merit. This suggests that some elements might allude to an actual person. On these techniques, see Tavazzi, *Il romanzo in gara*.

Celino's admirers is a rich nobleman. Attracted by his beauty, the old man invites both protagonists to his house. This is a further step in the gradual social ascent of the couple. Corradino pretends to be an aristocrat with their host. Celino falls in love with Enrichetta, the old man's daughter. One night, lying in bed together, he cannot resist his ardour. Revealing his true identity, and promising to save her honour by marrying her, Celino violates the young woman.¹¹⁸

Despite Celino repeatedly promising to talk with Enrichetta's father, nothing happens. The young woman, ashamed of what happened to her, lives in pain and remorse. When she tells Celino she might be pregnant, the young man talks with his partner, explaining his plans to get married. In another lesson, Corradino explains to him that Enrichetta's father will never agree to their wedding. Then, after stealing a box full of money, Corradino tricks his friend to get out of the city, and the two move to Livorno.

Once in Livorno, Corradino hires a boat to go to Genoa. When they are at sea, the crew of sailors, attracted by Celino, decides to kill the other passenger and get his money. However, Corradino's weapons make the sailors cautious. They finally agree to put opium in their victims' wine. Once Corradino and Celino fall asleep though, the sailors make two astonishing discoveries: Celino's true sexual identity; but also the story of the couple's crimes until that point. Corradino had been keeping a diary of their adventures since Cassino.

The meta-literary aspect that emerges from this episode is particularly interesting. Corradino's written account disappears immediately from the narrative (one of the crew will bring it back to Tuscany, with no further consequences) nor had it been mentioned before. In this sense, the episode can be interpreted as the remnants

118 The scene is followed by a critique of Enrichetta's father's behaviour. The narrator blames him for the lack of control over his daughter, as well as for being driven by his lust towards Celino.

of the autobiographical form so frequent in eighteenth-century Venetian novels.¹¹⁹ It is as if the protagonist is compelled to write his adventures even though he is no longer in charge of telling his story directly to the reader. Corradino's 'Itinerario' represents a dangerous, unacceptable form of writing which is impossible to show directly to readers. This text has no clear purpose:

Non si sa s'avesse intenzione d'apparecchiarsi materia a scrivere la sua vita,
o se godesse di leggere da sì in quante maniere aveva ingannato il Mondo.
È bene istupire che un Giovine tanto accorto com'era non avesse riguardo a
tutti que' fatali accidenti'.¹²⁰

Unlike the novels already considered, Corradino's writings do not have a didactic function. But this is one of the main causes which forbade the direct access of this text to readers. The functions usually related to literary fruition are excluded from this text, and Corradino's notebook cannot be included within the domain of literature. Instead, it enters in the juridical domain, and at the end of the episode, it is presented as a form of supporting evidence of his misdeeds. The sailor who read the story leaves a handwritten note in Corradino's pocket: 'Ladro, Seduttore, Briccone, il tuo *itinerario* è presentato in Giudizio a Livorno. Torna in Toscana, che il Boja t'aspetta'.¹²¹ The crew abandons the two tricksters on two separate spots of the same island.

On the island there is another episode of 'good luck'. When Celino and Corradino meet again, they steal the boat of a farmer who has just landed on the shore. While sailing the boat, Corradino discovers a box with a great treasure inside. All of a sudden they are incredibly rich: fearing the consequences of their theft and

119 See Crivelli, "*Né Arturo*", pp. 184–92.

120 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 55.

121 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 57.

remembering the risks of getting back to Tuscany, the couple moves to the Genoese Republic.

The treasure allows Corradino and Celino to finally climb to the top of the social ladder. The transformation is carefully played out, and contains the most dangerous ideas about society expressed by Corradino in the entire novel. The lesson on how to pretend to be an aristocrat is also a satirical portrait drawn by Piazza of some of the habits and customs of that class. The tirade includes a critique of contemporary fashions, ways of dressing, behaving and talking. The passage also works as a negative example to the reader, showing what should be avoided in everyday life.¹²² Nonetheless, the social criticism of Corradino's ideas requires a new intervention on the part of the author who, using a footnote, declares once again the distance between himself and the character.

In Milan, Corradino is finally able to set up their last identity. He hires a French secretary, M. Flambeau, to manage their finances; and a group of servants in livery suitable for their new rank. Then the newly formed group moves to Turin as Marchese di Tre Mari, and his wife. Finally, the two scoundrels have upgraded from 'astrologare i Villani' to Marquis and Marchioness and 'in quella figura, a decorare una nobilissima conversazione'.¹²³

Celino meanwhile remembers his past actions, and his love for Enrichetta brings him to a silent path of repentance. Despite his previous behaviour, he has decided to remain faithful to her, mainly abstaining from seducing other women.

122 Piazza inserts also a passage about the relationship between rich patrons, and writers. This attack is similar to the accusations made by the same author in other novels, later collected and elaborated in a famous passage of *I castelli in aria*. Antonio Piazza, 'Articolo VI: Le dediche' in *I Castelli in aria*, ed. by Paolo Rambelli, *Margini. Giornale della dedica e altro*, 1 (2007) [online] <http://www.margini.unibas.ch/web/rivista/numero_1/wunderkammer/articolo2/novella_piazza.htm> [accessed 17 October 2014]; see also Paolo Rambelli, 'Autori e lettori nel secondo Settecento: il caso di Antonio Piazza', in *I margini del libro. Indagine teorica e storica sui testi di dedica*, ed. by Maria Antonietta Terzoli (Rome: Antenore, 2004), pp. 239–62.

123 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 86.

While Celino endures this spiritual transformation, Corradino is ‘sempre uguale a se stesso, e nelle colpe incallito’.¹²⁴

To maintain a standard of living suitable to their new rank, they spend a large amount of money. In order to cover losses, they decide to make money through gambling. This choice will prove fatally wrong. The author’s irony is obvious: they have always been blessed by good luck. Once they seek their fortune with a system based on luck, however, their fate changes.

Both men start gambling avidly. In a short time they lose the better part of their remaining fortune. One night, Corradino, enraged by his losses, challenges their host for the evening. Seized by the man’s servants, he is put in jail. That night, Celino succeeds in convincing the other to pardon him. The story Celino presents to the man mixes together true and false information, one of the first symptoms indicating that he has been learning Corradino’s lessons. In exchange, the other asks them to leave the city immediately.

Corradino is released from jail, and the couple moves to Paris. In the capital, they continue to lose money until their money disappears. Their position has changed overnight: ‘Ecco i nostri Zingani inciviliti abbassati dalla Fortuna con un giro della sua ruota volubile’.¹²⁵ At that point, Corradino is ready to leave the city, and their creditors. Celino instead convinces him to sell his jewels, and make a last attempt at the gaming table.

The jewels sold by Celino are recognised as a property of the daughter of the Conte Belfiore di Beauvais. Some time before, she had escaped her father and disappeared. Witnesses also confirm a certain resemblance between the wife of Marchese di Tremari, and the Conte’s daughter. Convinced that he has finally found

¹²⁴ Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 87.

¹²⁵ Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 100.

his daughter, the Conte has Celino arrested and brought to a retreat for other young women. Alone and financially broken, Corradino avoids arrest by killing a soldier, and putting others to flight. Then, he leaves the city.

In a sort of narrative *ringkomposition*, he starts again to move around small towns and villages, earning a living as a fortune-teller and charlatan. One day, passing near Celino's retreat, he finally meets his old friend. The two men organise an escape. Corradino will play the role of a gypsy, who is able to change the sex of a person through magic. In a comic scene in front of other pupils and nuns, Corradino performs a magic ritual, and two old ladies certify the new identity of Celino.¹²⁶

Celino is brought to the Conte di Belfiore to show him the sudden change, and negotiate his release. Corradino meanwhile is requested by other women in the retreat to perform another transformation on other women. Many of them see this change of sexual identity as a way to set themselves free from captivity. Particularly motivated are those 'carcerate per indiscrezione de' loro mariti'¹²⁷ as well as those who just want to be men 'per ricuperare la libertà'.¹²⁸ Once his fraud becomes evident, Corradino escapes from the convent and kills two of the sentries who wanted to arrest him.

Celino, meanwhile, has convinced the Conte di Belfiore to release him. As happened with the old officer in Turin, again the young man shows his ability in manipulating truth and falsehood. Then the two protagonists are finally reunited and decide to move to Germany. Although their adventures appear to be starting again, Corradino's end is near: 'il Cielo stanco di sofferirlo l'appressava agli orli del Sepolcro, e serbava il colpo della vendicatrice sua spada'.¹²⁹ While they are walking under a violent rainstorm, Corradino mocks the elements singing the verse 'venga

126 'È vero, è vero! [...] Misero tutto sossopra il Ritiro', Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 116.

127 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 117.

128 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 117.

129 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 123.

fulmini, nembi, e il Mondo cada'.¹³⁰ Suddenly, a lightning bolt strikes and kills him instantly.

The last pages of the novel inform the reader that Celino 'fu debitore alla morte ferale del suo Compagno, di quell'edificante ravvedimento che segnalò finora il resto dell'esemplare sua vita'.¹³¹ The narrator also informs the reader that the story of Celino's repentance will be told by the protagonist himself in 'un libro intitolato *Il Romito*, il quale comincia dove questo finisce e contiene le memorie di quella vita che ei prese a condurre col suo pentimento'.¹³² It is interesting to note how the autobiographical form can be used again once the narrative no longer centres on negative or immoral behaviour. In this sense, *Il romito* reflects the difficulties of positioning Corradino's *itinerario* which have been discussed before.

The focus on two protagonists creates a complex system of references. Morace defines it as 'specular symmetry',¹³³ epitomized by the two protagonists. The mirroring and interplay of internal references continues also into the next novel.¹³⁴

The representation of education and disobedience follows a similar structure. Corradino and Celino are both young; both of them, at one point or another, are subject to the control of adults and provided with an education. However, Corradino receives an education proper to his class. His learning path ends abruptly because of his unruly behaviour; Celino begins his own (dis)education only after meeting his new companion.

130 The verse comes from an heroic poem by Girolamo Graziani, *Il conquisto di Granata* (Modena: Soliani, 1650), 5.viii. The pagan character Orgonte is caught on his ship in a tempest, and recklessly challenges the elements.

131 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 124.

132 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 126.

133 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 112. The scholar also quotes Ilaria Crotti, who found a similar structuring in Piazza's *L'amor tra l'armi*.

134 As Morace points out, *Il romito* continues the intertextual play with the previous novel, repeating and mirroring characters and actions. See in particular Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, pp. 112–13.

The outcome of their learning processes is also different. Corradino's short education in the convent does not seem to have any positive effect on him. On the other hand, and despite all efforts made by Corradino as a teacher, the path of Celino ends up positively, as if he had learnt the lesson.

Interestingly, the lesson learnt is not one Corradino has been trying to teach Celino, but rather the result of direct experience and individual elaboration made by the younger friend. The development and results of both educative paths are deeply influenced by their individual nature and, more importantly, social origins. Accordingly, disobedience is interpreted in relation to the individual: Corradino transforms simple disobedience into crime; in the case of Celino it is instead included in the learning process.

As mentioned before, the character of Corradino follows a long path that from his first act of disobedience leads him to a life of fraud and crime, including murder. Morace observed that the reference to Masaniello as an ancestor of Corradino reveals that 'l'istinto ad essere capo carismatico, la volontà di potenza, l'ansia di sprigionare dai limiti del proprio *status*, ingrandendo i vincoli della gerarchia sociale'¹³⁵ passed from the famous rebel to his progeny – even though in Corradino's case these qualities are used for the 'fruizione dell'individuale e del materiale'¹³⁶ and have no political purposes.

One can read Corradino's character through his physiognomy. It is through his traits that it is possible to understand his true nature. He has 'in viso una certa maschile ferocia che manteneva in lui un'intima corrispondenza co' sentimenti dell'animo'.¹³⁷ He is also associated with metaphors and similes related to nature, and

135 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 85.

136 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 85.

137 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 4.

wilderness.¹³⁸ The brutality of features is reinforced by that of his actions. Following a common pattern for criminal biographies, since he was young he has been mistreating and killing animals. He always carries weapons, making a good use of them. Not surprisingly, sadistic tendencies are already present from early age, as an indication that his future cannot be changed.

Corradino also has remarkable qualities. On the one hand, he has great manual skills, which can be symbolically related to his plebeian origins. The references to Corradino's manual skills are clearly used to highlight his social position and origins. There is no contradiction between these skills and the formal education received in the convent. The need for basic schooling for people of the lower classes, in particular artisans, was a common view.¹³⁹

Even more importantly, Corradino has stunning intellectual skills. He has an incredible thirst for knowledge,¹⁴⁰ is extremely clever and has a bright intellect. These skills are usefully applied in his formal education, which includes writing and reading correctly, Latin grammar and the basics of French language.¹⁴¹ The schooling received does not provide him with a solid background. His interest in culture and knowledge emerges in other episodes of the novel: he is skilled enough to write a 'sonetto leggiadrissimo'¹⁴² about his last practical joke in the convent; and later he will start writing his adventures. However in Turin, success in conversations is

138 To give a few examples, his character is 'feroce, selvaggio, indomabile' (p. 5); in jail, he is like a bird in a cage (p. 9).

139 A *supplica* addressed to the *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova* in 1770, the guilds of *marangoni*, *muratori* and *tagliapietra* proposed the establishment of a school for their members. See Samuele Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, 3rd edn, 9 vols (Venice: Filippi, 1972–75), VIII (1975), 431–32.

140 'Avidità di sapere', Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 5.

141 Corradino's education is very different from that of an aristocrat. It is rather similar to that reserved for people from the lower and middle classes in Public elementary schools. In Venice each *Sestriere* had had a small public school since the sixteenth century. On these aspects see Gullino, *La politica scolastica veneziana*; Gullino, 'Educazione, formazione, istruzione'; and Piero Lucchi, 'La prima istruzione: idee, metodi, libri' in *Il catechismo e la grammatica*, ed. by Gian Paolo Brizzi, 2 vols (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985–86), I, pp. 25–81.

142 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 9.

caused by his brilliant mind, not culture. A bit of erudition, his innate talkative attitude, and an ‘ingegno sublime’ all concur in making him appear as ‘a giovine scienziato, quale veramente non era’.¹⁴³

The main problem with Corradino is that he does not make correct use of his talent. Despite intellectual qualities, his inner nature – exemplified by sadistic tendencies, and physical features – is impossible to change.¹⁴⁴ The closing remarks of the author focus precisely on this issue. Corradino could have been a great scientist, a *letterato*, a soldier, or even a (plebeian) Emperor like the Persian *Kouli-Khan*.¹⁴⁵ Nonetheless, ‘al fianco d’un Soldato una spada è onorata, e diventa infame in pugno d’un Assassino’.¹⁴⁶

Piazza’s words might suggest that Corradino was actually able to choose his own destiny. In fact, as mentioned before, textual evidence demonstrates that his spirit of revolt, and his downfall, are innate. Actually, as Morace points out,¹⁴⁷ this character does not change during the novel. For this reason, his fate makes him a perfect *exemplum* of bad behaviour to be shown to the reader. There is a clear path from the almost innocuous jests conceived in the convent to the killings made in France, while Corradino’s negative actions gradually transform him from a simply disobedient young man, to a liar, a sinner, a conman, a thief, and finally a murderer. In this way, he can be taken as a negative example (and a warning for the reader) under several domains, including morality, religion, and crime. Corradino’s

143 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 88.

144 His cultural consumption partly reflects this aspect. In Turin he is eager to buy and read books, but ‘non faceva per lui se contrario era al buon costume, e alla Fede’. Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 88. In the same passage, the reader discovers that Corradino is also a consumer of pornographic images.

145 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 122. On Thamas Kouli-Khan, see *Istoria di Thamas Kouli-Kan, tradotta dal francese*, 2 vols (London [but Venice], [Pasquali], 1740). On the publishing history and attributions see *False date: repertorio delle licenze di stampa veneziane con falso luogo di stampa*, ed. by Patrizia Bravetti and Orfea Granzotto (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2008), p. 43.

146 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 122.

147 ‘Personaggio a caratura univoca, monolitico nel suo perverso cammino senza flessioni, nel suo destino di solitudine e di degradata tragicità’, Morace, *Il prisma dell’apparenza*, pp. 89–90.

exemplary path however becomes effective only when compared with the other disobedient subject of the novel, Celino.

Celino's role is typical of young protagonists in other novels. As Morace points out, Celino is a character 'in divenire, educato dal corso della vita e dell'azione, in una parola un eroe mediocre da *Bildungsroman*'.¹⁴⁸ What is interesting, however, is that his *Bildung* takes two different, opposite directions. On the one hand, he follows an evil educative path led by Corradino. Celino learns how to lie, and to seduce others for his own benefit. On the other hand, however, his transformation is also similar to that already seen in other protagonists. At the end of the novel, and despite the evil influence of Corradino, Celino will start to behave as an adult (aristocrat): responsible and aware of his place in society, and the world.

The negative education begins as soon as the two protagonists meet. Corradino's and Celino's relationship is rooted in seduction. Seduction is also one of the narrative pillars of the plot. The examples of it displayed in the novel perfectly correspond to the legal definition of it, given by Ferro's *Dizionario*: 'Seduzione è un inganno artificioso, che s'impiega per fare che qualcheduno acconsenta a qualche atto o passo contrario al suo onore, o ai suoi interessi.'¹⁴⁹ The first approach made by Corradino, when still convinced that Celino is a woman, is a sexual seduction. After discovering the truth, Corradino continues to seduce the other with words. This approach characterises their relationship almost until the end, even after Celino has been persuaded to abandon his mother and leave Cassino.

The main difference between these two periods – before and after the first act of disobedience – is that under the supervision of his friend, Celino becomes himself a seducer. His improvement in this role follows the same path seen in his relationship

148 Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 89.

149 Ferro, *Dizionario*, II, 673.

with Corradino. At the beginning, Celino seduces others by using his feminine features, and body. Thus, by appealing to their sexual desire. Later he becomes aware of other seductive strategies. In particular, he learns how to perform rhetorical seduction: to manipulate truth with his words in order to convince other people.¹⁵⁰ The most important example of this transformation is the seduction of Enrichetta. On that occasion, he can invent a reliable story to seduce her. As usual, he puts together truth and falsehood:

Le giurò di essere nobile, di essere ricco, di essere libero [...] Le diede sacra parola di Matrimonio. Perorò in favore della sua calda passione, pianse, pregò, minacciolla, troncò le parole sulle di lei labbra. Finalmente tanto disse e fece tanto, che giunse a vincerla.¹⁵¹

Celino has learnt all these skills from Corradino. Their relationship is a reversed version of that between teacher-pupil.¹⁵² This complex relationship is built on the superiority of Corradino over Celino mainly based on their different age, while at the same time following a gendered model. Corradino's dangerous (and brutal) masculinity is mirrored by the feminized identity of Celino.

This identity deeply influences the behaviour of this character. In this sense, the transvestism of *I zingani* is similar to that of women protagonists in other novels: not only does Celino dress up as a woman, he also absorbs some features constructed as typical of this gender. There are several examples of this process. Celino shows a 'feminized' sensibility, and unlike his partner is able to show his feelings and even cry. Furthermore, when Celino takes action to save Corradino for instance, his choices are the same of those that a woman would be expected to make in a similar

150 This is clearly the case in the episodes occurring in Turin with the Maresciallo who has Corradino arrested. Celino is able to invent a story, manipulating true and false information, to convince the officer attacked by Corradino to get his partner released. The same happens in his meeting with Conte di Belfiore, where he shows that he has mastered his own rhetorical abilities.

151 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 41.

152 The novel has also passages that refers to this relationship explicitly, as in the sentence 'sotto la scuola di Corradino', Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 25.

situation, for instance when he proposes to save their finances by selling his jewellery. In this sense, Celino's transvestism is a sign of the (positive) feminization of eighteenth-century society signalled by Crivelli.¹⁵³ At the same time, Celino seems also affected by some of the stereotypical defects usually ascribed to women (and often remembered in Piazza's novels), as a negative form of 'effeminatezza' often deprecated by many contemporaries: the weakness of his will, and the fact of being easily influenced by others, are all cases in point.¹⁵⁴

These defects can be also ascribed to Celino's young age.¹⁵⁵ When they meet for the first time, he is almost a child, a young boy with no experience of the world, gullible and credulous. He listens to his new friend's proposal 'a bocca aperta'.¹⁵⁶ He even talks with a childish tone.¹⁵⁷ Corradino, who treats the other as an immature, inexperienced 'scioccarello', reinforces this sense of inferiority.¹⁵⁸ Since its beginning therefore, their relationship reflects that between a pupil and a teacher.

Corradino's didactic method is based on out-and-out lectures.¹⁵⁹ Corradino explains to his pupil how to behave as a woman,¹⁶⁰ or how to pretend to be an aristocrat.¹⁶¹ He makes similar speeches also when Celino expresses regret for their actions. In this case, the explanation is usually aimed at justifying their behaviour, presented as a rightful punishment of their victim.¹⁶²

153 Crivelli, "*Né Arturo*", pp. 211–20.

154 See Crivelli, "*Né Arturo*", p. 215–16.

155 As already seen before (for instance earlier in this chapter, discussing the nature and extension of guardianship) the similarity between women and the young was a common opinion in the eighteenth century.

156 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 20.

157 'Sono io di marzapane? perch'abbiano essi a temere che qualcuno mi mangi?', Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 13. The episode follows a structure similar to that of fairy tales. Celino does not follow his mother, who prohibited him from getting acquainted with strangers. Instead, he follows Corradino into his house, and ends up in his bed.

158 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 47.

159 Properly called in the novel 'lezioni di Corradino', Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 30.

160 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 36.

161 Piazza, *I zingani*, pp. 72–78. The speech forms all of chapter 10.

162 The teaching proves effective: 'Celino cominciava a farsi degno del suo Maestro. Intendeva e parlava francamente il Gergo insegnatogli. Abbondava di parole, di menzogne, di partiti. A forza di far guerra alla sua coscienza era giunto a non più sentirne i rimorsi. Imbevuto delle dannate

The apparent focus on the teacher-pupil model is reflected in the different influences and presences of parents. As it was in *L'avventuriere*, the presence of parental figures is scarce. Corradino becomes an orphan very early; Celino has lost his father, who was not a positive figure, as he had squandered the family's estate before dying. However, his presence is limited to one sentence. Two other paternal figures are Enrichetta's father, and Conte di Belfiore. Both are described as very old: the former 'vecchio impotente';¹⁶³ the latter 'sordo come un macigno'.¹⁶⁴

The relationship usually found between disobedience and parental education also appears to be less effective. The two protagonists' disobedient behaviour is not related to their parents' mistakes. Corradino inherits unruliness and spirit of revolt from his ancestor Masaniello, as his parents do not seem to have any influence on him.¹⁶⁵ Celino's disobedience has no relation with the behaviour of his mother.¹⁶⁶ In fact, since the beginning she is a victim of her son's actions.

The causes of Celino's disobedience are related to weaknesses typical of the young: 'fanciullino ancora ed incapace di qualche saggio riflesso, si abbandonò alla lubricità dell'etade, ed a' trasporti del genio'.¹⁶⁷ Describing Celino's betrayal, the narrator also comments: 'figli ingrattissimi, questa è la belle mercede, che solete a' dolori, alle veglie, alle fatiche, e a' sudori, di chi vi diede la vita'.¹⁶⁸ His mother always demonstrates proper behaviour, even after Celino's escape, when she appeals to the authorities to have him back. As mentioned before, parents – in particular

massime del suo Compagno, aveva spento ogni sentimento di Religione, e si credeva lecito tutto per soddisfare le proprie passioni', Piazza, *I zingani*, pp. 29–30.

163 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 42.

164 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 121.

165 To reinforce this idea, the author makes Corradino live alone, without any supervision from adults, although he is almost a child.

166 And his father's actions, limited to one sentence, are not enough to concur in his son's disobedience

167 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 20.

168 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 21.

aristocrats – often leant on the State’s intervention to coerce children to obedience.¹⁶⁹ Besides, the seduction of Celino fits perfectly with the description of the crime of ‘ratto di seduzione’,¹⁷⁰ making the mother’s appeal legally admissible. The same applies to Conte di Belfiore and his (alleged) ‘daughter’ Celino, who gets arrested together with Corradino, now considered the seducer. Celino’s negative path, as already said, is accompanied by a positive individual improvement. The most evident element of this improvement is embodied by his repentance and sense of guilt. Other hints of his maturation, however, can be found in other situations, for instance, when he deals with financial issues. The first time this happens in Milan, when he proposes to reduce the number of their servants to save their remaining money. The second time, in Paris, he suggests selling all their jewellery instead of escaping the city. This second choice is not a signal of redemption: the aim is to put all the money on the gambling table. However, its logic is closer to one of his original rank and status.

This is precisely the point about Celino’s maturation. At the beginning of the narrative, he believes that his father just left him ‘una inutile nobiltà’.¹⁷¹ As Morace points out, during his adventures Celino becomes ‘memore della propria estrazione familiare’.¹⁷² This remembrance also helps to distinguish him from Corradino and his lower social origins. In fact, the difference between Celino and his partner is mainly based on the limits to individual behaviour established by the corresponding social rank. The importance of behaving accordingly to one’s own status is clearly

169 On this see Tiziana Plebani, ‘Ragione di Stato e sentimenti’.

170 ‘Ed è quello che si fa senz’alcuna resistenza per parte della persona rapita, e che ha luogo quando con artifizii, promesse, o altrimenti si seducono i figliuoli o figliuole minori, e si fanno concorrere al proprio rapimento. Si dice anche raptus in parentes, perchè si commette contro la volontà dei parenti’, Ferro, *Dizionario*, II, p. 588.

171 Piazza, *I zingani*, p. 20. Useless mainly because the father squandered all their money, but the deprecation of his status remains anyway.

172 Morace, *Il prisma dell’apparenza*, pp. 92, 102.

symbolised by Corradino's political *hybris*,¹⁷³ and in the almost innate repentance of Celino.

The difference is exemplified in Corradino's fate. His death summarizes the didactic message of the novel, as the final punishment for his rebellion. But using a champion of vice and social rebellion as a main protagonist was in any case a difficult choice. The choice could have been influenced by previous examples of criminal biographies. Pietro Chiari, who translated an original French account¹⁷⁴ on the life of Mandrin, in an introductory note wrote: 'Non sono gli Eroi soltanto, di cui si scrive la vita; ma giova alle volte scriverla anche de' Fuorusciti, de' Contrabbandieri, e de' ladri,'¹⁷⁵ thus legitimating the choice of a protagonist who sets a negative example for the book. Furthermore, as the author of the book pointed out, its purpose was to 'dilettare, ed istruire al tempo medesimo chi vorrà darsi la pena di leggerlo', using the same keywords associated with *letteratura amena*. Mandrin was an actual person responsible for his actions (and rightly punished for them). The account of his life is true and considered as such by readers. It does not fall in the domain of fiction. Corradino's situation is exactly the opposite. Being a fictional character transforms his responsibility in two ways. On the one hand, it gets much nearer the author. Every time Corradino proclaims his rebellious ideas against the *status quo*, Piazza is forced to intervene directly in the text. In the last few pages he proclaims the moral of the story, and once again his distance from his invented character.

On the other hand, Corradino's responsibility requires a high-level interpretation on the part of the readers. From this perspective, the novel is an experiment – one of the most advanced in the eighteenth-century Italian novel – in the relationship with the readership. Piazza fosters the idea, already suggested and

173 'La volontà di potenza, l'ansia di sprigionare dai limiti del proprio status, infrangendo i vincoli della gerarchia sociale', Morace, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, p. 85.

174 Cleron, *Histoire de Louis Mandrin*, p. [iii].

175 Cleron, *Histoire de Louis Mandrin*, p. [iv].

promoted by Chiari, that readers should be more independent in their interpretation of the text. As Daniela Mangione points out, with this conception of the novel ‘ad essere messa in crisi, in sintesi, è la posizione classica di subordinazione del lettore all’autore’.¹⁷⁶ In this sense, the last pages of the novel present a hybrid form between the traditional ‘paternalistic’ vision of didacticism, and the more advanced one, which gives more freedom to the reader.

Paradoxically, *I zingani* seems to have this experimental attitude in common with *L’avventuriere*. The latter was an experiment in translating some ideas about literature and the world which were usually fostered by a traditionalist group of *letterati*; a group that, with the exception of Gasparo Gozzi’s failed attempt, *il Mondo morale*, had also made a point of rejecting novels and their readership. Piazza, on the other hand, tried to set readers free to enjoy their reading, while trusting that they would get the right message from it. None of them would be ultimately successful. The *letterati*’s perspective will soon take the form of novels that are mainly aimed at fellow intellectuals. Piazza in the following years will try other genres and explore different themes (first and foremost, the theatrical trilogy). Then his production fades out, alongside the decline of the book market, including this time the urban public which had composed the core readership of the novel.

¹⁷⁶ Daniela Mangione, *Prima di Manzoni*, p. 125.

Conclusion

Piazza's *I zingani* draws an invisible line which divides two moments in the history of the Venetian novel and *letteratura amena*, corresponding to the transition of the publishing market from the peak of success in the 1730s to the decline of the 1760s, and the final crisis at the end of this decade.

An attentive observer of this transformation was Gasparo Gozzi. In the 1760s, he was appointed *supervisore alle stampe*, and in his reports to the *Riformatori* he clearly highlighted the problems of the book world. Among other reasons, Gozzi was concerned that Venetian entrepreneurs were 'inerti, poco sensibili al problema, intenti a vivere di rendita e a carpirsi vicendevolmente i residui attivi'. In particular, the production of new titles was notably low.¹ The scarcity of authors in Venice was a related problem: entrepreneurs paid them almost nothing, and were not interested at all in the risks of publishing new titles.²

This was also a result of the transformation in the relationship among the three agents of literary production – readers, publishers, and writers – which occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century.³ The decline and 'disappearance' of the

1 'È una compassione a vedersi [...] che tutte le altre nazioni s'ingegnino di stampar cose nuove e tentino con questo solo mezzo che resta nell'alluvione presente di libri, di farsi strada al commercio; mentre che l'Università sola di Venezia, chiudendo gli occhi a tal verità, si ostina a voler credere che gli sconcerti suoi maggiori derivino da altro che dall'affidarsi sempre ai suoi rancidumi', Gasparo Gozzi, *Tre relazioni inedite del conte Gasparo Gozzi* (Venice: Merlo, 1867), p. 16. Quoted in Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, p. 301.

2 Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana*, p. 301.

3 Alberto Cadioli, *La storia finta: il romanzo e i suoi lettori nei dibattiti di primo Ottocento*

novel is due to issues related to all of these. The relatively small Venetian public for *letteratura amena* was able to sustain the emerging market and its initial development in the 1760s, but it could not create the demand needed to make it grow in the medium term. Booksellers and printers, probably aware of this fact, continued to make low, secure investments on existing titles to minimize their risk. From the end of the 1760s onwards, most of them were too poor to invest in new titles anyway.

The story of Piazza is the perfect example of the situation of professional authors. To earn a living from his work, he combined modern and traditional practices. He tried (or was forced by the situation) to solve the lack of investment by selling his works through subscription. In this way, he could also avoid the unprofitable mediation of publishers.⁴ At the same time, he raised money by way of dedications, the most traditional form of patronage. Unfortunately for him, the world had changed, and in most cases this strategy did not pay off.⁵ The direct relationship with readers also suggests, as previously mentioned, that Piazza attempted to expand his audience, as he did with the *Gazzetta Urbana Veneta*, in the 1780s, when he tried to also reach the public of the *terraferma*. Whether he did the same with the novel is difficult to say, and this certainly would be worth further investigation. Moreover, in the 1770s, with few exceptions, Piazza remained almost the only novelist active in the Venetian market. A single author could not be made responsible for the survival of an entire literary genre.

Furthermore, *letterati* resisted acknowledging the existence of the new public of ‘lettori medi’: a public which was cultured but not erudite; which was interested in, and *curious* about different topics, but still remained a non-specialised public. The

(Milan: Il Saggiatore, 2001), pp. 16–20; see also Crivelli, “*Né Arturo*”, pp. 122–39.

4 The practice had been inaugurated by Chiari in 1761 with the publication of *La bella pellegrina*, printed by Marcuzzi – the same of *Gazzetta veneta*, then edited by the abbot. The novel had been funded through subscription. In that instance, Chiari had clearly explained that he wanted to set himself free from publishers, which since then had made their fortune at his expense.

5 On this see Antonio Piazza, ‘I Castelli in aria - Articolo VI: Le dediche’.

different approaches used by each author in the relationship with this reader, shows that this barrier was felt also by novelists. It was a problem of trusting readers. Chiari's position clearly shows this uncertainty: from his first attempts to make the novel acceptable to 'traditional' readers and the intellectual élite, to the way in which he accompanies readers of novels, explaining and guiding their interpretation. Piazza's *I zingani* stands at the opposite end of the spectrum. However, his trust in readers is still mediated through the use of footnotes, the noisy intervention of an author who still needs to clarify his position in relation to the text, and the reader.

The impossibility of trusting the 'lettore medio' brings us back to the opinion of contemporary intellectuals who saw the public of these books as *volgo* and *illetterato*,⁶ as well as to those (not perforce 'enemies' of the novel) who associated this genre with women or the young.⁷

The main risk of this latter association is that of identifying these readers (usually considered by contemporaries as 'psychologically weak') with the actual public of this genre. Crivelli has successfully challenged the frequent association made by previous critics between the predominance of female protagonists in Venetian novels and a public mostly composed of women. And the same can be said about the young. It is true that several paratexts refer to the 'gioventù' as a privileged addressee of the novel; and young disobedient protagonists are of course at the very centre of the narrative. However, it would be impossible to point at the young as the main addressee of this genre. Some examples given in novels could address a young,

6 'La difficoltà consiste nell'elaborare un testo accessibile a un pubblico illetterato a partire da un patrimonio classicistico di convenzioni espressive: per parlare ai nuovi lettori, lo scrittore dispone di un sapere letterario ancora fortemente tradizionale', Clerici, *Il romanzo italiano*, p. 161. It is interesting to note the ambiguity of the adjective 'illetterato' when referring to readers of the novel. In current Italian language, the term stands for *analfabeta*, someone who does not know how to read or write. But at the same time, it also indicates a 'persona che non ha sufficiente cultura, che è priva di quella finezza e sensibilità che può derivare dallo studio delle lettere; quindi grossolano, rozzo, anche come espressione di spregio: *romanzieri, professori illetterati*'. I cannot but notice the closing example of the definition, which sounds extremely poignant when thinking about the reception of eighteenth century Venetian novelists.

7 Crivelli, "*Né Arturo*", p. 120.

inexperienced reader; but many others could be equally useful to an adult parent, showing the proper way to educate her children. In this sense, rather than taking part in the conflict, novels mediate between existing conflicts by making possible solutions available to all those involved.

Another issue in studying the novel and its 'lettore medio' is caused by what we may call 'Watt's effect'. As Paul Hunter argues, Watt's interpretation of the 'triple rise' of a middle class, of literacy, and of the novel 'has often been interpreted to imply that the novel's early readers were middle class and that the novel was in fact a middle-class enterprise' which in fact represents 'a caricature of Watt's argument, a misunderstanding of the process of social change and of class history, and a vast simplification of the readership spectrum'.⁸ Setting a single model for the rise of the novel as a literary form also means that any other emergence of this genre would become *ipso facto* an aberration, or a derivation from that model.⁹ Introducing a collection of essays that analyse the eighteenth century novel in European perspective, Jenny Mander argued that existing historiography of the novel 'gives overwhelming prominence to American critics working on the English novel', while on the contrary we should 'rethink the rise of the novel by dramatically expanding the geographical perspective from which the genre is explored'.¹⁰

8 J. Paul Hunter, 'The Novel and Social/Cultural History', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. by John J. Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 9–40 (19). See also Crivelli, "Né Arturo", pp. 10–11. Considering that novels could be read out loud, maybe to illiterate readers, Clerici argues 'questa fruizione pubblica, "recitata" del testo, non esclude affatto una più evoluta lettura privata e mentale, per eccellenza "borghese"', Clerici, *Il romanzo italiano*, p. 162.

9 I am thinking about Moretti's theories, beginning with Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel (1800-1900)* (London: Verso, 1998), and continued in subsequent years, including with a long debate in the *New Left Review*, now collected in Christopher Prendergast and Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson, *Debating World Literature* (London, New York: Verso, 2004). See also Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (London; New York: Verso, 2005). And of course, Franco Moretti, *Il romanzo*, 5 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 2001–3); and the English version Franco Moretti, *The Novel*, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). See also Michael Caesar, 'Franco Moretti and the World Literature Debate', *Italian Studies*, 62 (2007), 125–135.

10 Mander, 'Introduction', in *Remapping the European novel*, ed. by Mander.

This dissertation points in a similar direction. By considering the novel and *letteratura amena* in the delimited context of Venice and its society, and even more particularly of its élites, an analysis of education and disobedience helps to highlight conflicts and transformations which are peculiar to this society, while at the same time forming part of wider historical change. The ways in which different novelists dealt with education and disobedience show how contemporary ideas diffused in Europe were processed and interpreted through novels, and adapted to the context of Venice. This is equally true for Chiari, Basso, or Piazza. As Marino Berengo argued, the cultural and social environment of the city adapted influences coming from abroad in its own way: ‘una più adeguata immagine dell’ambiente veneto può essere tratta dalla diffusa tendenza ad un compromesso tra società conservatrice e pensiero moderno’.¹¹ Not surprisingly, Berengo offers the example of Gasparo Gozzi, whose ‘intensa familiarità col pensiero dei philosophes è stata per lui un’esperienza di gusto che non si è convertita in adesione interiore, né ha infuso nella sua opera una più vigorosa e combattiva vitalità’.¹²

The way in which social mobility is represented in novels offers a perfect example of the way in which social changes were interpreted using the peculiar perspective of Venetian culture (and more in particular of its élites). Evidently, none of the novels promote mobility among different social classes. In this sense, the novel can be described in very similar terms to those used by Anna Scannapieco to describe Goldoni’s *Il padre di famiglia*:

11 Berengo, *La società veneta*, p. 187.

12 Berengo, *La società veneta*, p. 188. Gozzi’s life is interesting, as it mirrors several contradictions of contemporary Venetian élites, which are also easy to find in novels. Gozzi was a nobleman, but his family had several financial struggles. He fell in love and married the poet Luisa Bergalli, a bourgeois, against the will of his family. He and Luisa survived by working as professional authors: both were translators and even tried the role of playwrights. Gasparo’s struggles ended only in the 1760s, when he obtained a position in the State administration. On Gozzi see Domenico Proietti, ‘Gozzi, Gasparo’, in *DBI*, 58 (2002), <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gasparo-gozzi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gasparo-gozzi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)> [accessed 29 december 2014]; *Gasparo Gozzi: Il lavoro di un intellettuale*, ed. by Crotti and Ricorda; ‘Gasparo e Carlo Gozzi’ in Crotti, Vescovo and Ricorda, *Il mondo vivo*, pp. 153–224.

[I]l *padre di famiglia* appare senz'altro come un manifesto politico-programmatico "mis en action", omogeneo agli interessi dell'ordine costituito e funzionale ad una deliberata volontà di preservazione e consolidamento degli assetti gerarchici propri di una società di *ancien régime*. Che il protagonista-portavoce sia un rappresentante della cosiddetta borghesia mercantile non solo non deve sorprendere, ma è anzi riprova dell'intangibilità di un modello, assunto come dato "naturale" e in quanto tale interiorizzato (o interiorizzabile) da ciascuno degli elementi che compongono l'equilibrio piramidale.¹³

The social world represented in novels, however, is far from static. All narratives deal with issues that deeply affected contemporary Venetian society, and in particular the contradiction between status and wealth felt inside aristocracy, which recalls the contemporary conflict between the highest two classes of aristocracy, and the rest. This contradiction is reflected in the aspiration to climb up the social ladder, albeit inside the aristocracy.

This does not exclude the fact that non-aristocratic people – at least those who were part of the *élites* – could witness similar contradictions or the need for mobility. The status in this case works as expected, for instance by limiting access to public careers (merited only by aristocracy).¹⁴

The only type of mobility between different classes allowed in novels, promoted and defended by authors, is that related to intellectuals. Novels often express the implicit idea that cultural value can be translated into a form of nobility, and therefore that intellectual talents could help the author to climb the social ladder.¹⁵ In this way, authors are able to promote their own social mobility without

13 Anna Scannapieco, 'Introduzione' in Carlo Goldoni, *Il padre di famiglia*, ed. by Anna Scannapieco (Venice: Marsilio, 1996), pp. 9–52 (13).

14 Still, it would be difficult to find the need for mobility among the Venetian (and from the Veneto) middle-classes in the sense usually attributed to this class in other contexts. As Berengo points out: Venetian bourgeoisie 'mentre si viene consolidando come classe economica, non esiste ancora come forza politica'. Berengo, *La società veneta*, p. 45.

15 Significantly, Pizzamiglio mentioned 'aristocrazie culturali' together with those 'di nascita', Pizzamiglio, 'Le fortune del romanzo', p. 179.

challenging the status quo. The fact that intellectual professions were often the only opportunity left to poor, talented aristocrats to earn a living was also helpful for this purpose.¹⁶

The same two elements, status and wealth, are also the cause of the conflict inside families, between different generations: that about marriage. The mediation proposed in *La filosofessa*, *L'omicida* and *L'avventuriere* shows the continuing importance of marriage for the social and political structure of Venice. Following the mentality that emerges from these narratives, individual desires and feelings need to be sacrificed to save the interest of the family. This personal renunciation is presented as part of a process of maturation, and the main difference between an adult and a young person is that the former can control and manage his/her own feelings, obedient to that which society (and the family) requires from him or her.

From this perspective the four novels analysed do not seem to fit with that 'diffusione del linguaggio e della cultura della sensibilità' recently observed by Tiziana Plebani,¹⁷ in the sense that in these works the fulfilment of individual desires is always subordinate to social requirements.¹⁸ As one example, Rinaldo in *L'avventuriere* is able to marry Elisa, even though she is not an aristocrat. However, in this case social boundaries are not broken because of love and sensibility. Rinaldo's choice is led by honour and interest; his initial passion for Elisa has been replaced by a quiet affection that does not affect his choices.

16 I have highlighted this aspect in *L'avventuriere*, but the main example probably is Chiari's *Il poeta*. Also, for Berengo, the only group which somehow emerges from the Venetian middle-classes is precisely that of 'uomini di cultura' e primi tra essi, I 'letterati, che spesso attraverso la diffusione dei loro scritti acquistano un notevole ascendente nella "civil società"', Berengo, *La società veneta*, p. 46.

17 Plebani, *Un secolo di sentimenti*, p. 126. From this point of view, it would be useful to expand the analysis to contemporary novels, and to the production in subsequent decades.

18 This aspect should definitely be assessed in other novels, and over a longer period. For instance, when the protagonist is not an aristocrat, is she more free to follow her feelings than an aristocratic one? In this sense, it would be useful to answer the question by analysing the production of Piazza in the 1770s, namely the 'Trilogia di Giulietta'.

Novels offer examples of disobedient children who finally adapt to social requirements. At the same time, there are other examples, both positive and negative, of the way in which fathers, mothers and tutors should perform their educative role. In this sense, these narratives offered a safe zone to negotiate family conflicts and parental authority, giving suitable (and unsuitable) examples both to parents and children and showing a possible resolution for their struggle. The generational conflict, however, could only be solved by a mutual adaptation: parents should conform to the new rules about education and their role as their sons and daughters learn how to perform their own role in society. And this allowed a slow and continuous absorption of new ideas within the existing ideology of the élites. It was a non-traumatic, gradual inclusion, the result of a careful symbolic negotiation, rather than a sudden transformation of the *status quo*.

This analysis helps to highlight some aspects of the relationship between Venetian readers and the novel. Many other questions could be addressed by similar analysis of subsequent years, as well as by tracing the progress of these books outside Venice. As I have pointed out, I have limited my search to the ‘first life’ of books, but from the canals of the *Serenissima*, many paths were possible. As one example, it might be enough to quote from a manual of education written by the director of a collegium for young people, published in Palermo in 1775.¹⁹ The author initially forbade the reading of novels while pupils were under his custody:

usciti però di cura non son'io tanto severo, che non consigli loro un discreto maneggio di questi libri; ma vi vuol troppa cautela: guai se sceglieranno quell'inutili Favole, dalle quali niente si cava di buono sugo.²⁰

19 Carlo Santacolomba, *L'Educazione della gioventù civile proposta ai figliuoli del Real Conserbatojo del Buon Pastore. Da Carlo Santacolomba* (Palermo: Rapetti, 1775), p. 295.

20 Santacolomba, *L'Educazione della gioventù*, p. 295.

Above all, they should be careful to choose the right books. They should not read those that caused ‘in un cuor giovanile la perigliosa commozione di affetti, che si patisce, senza volerla, qualor si leggono certi tratti amatorj, e certi notturni delitti ai quali inclina la debolissima umanità’. Not all novels, however, are the same:

Que’ romanzi però, che sotto la scorza di un favoloso allettativo, contengono utili insegnamenti per la buona vita degli uomini perchè interdirlì? [...] [these books] sviluppano la maniera di ben pensare, rendono usuali le notizie delle mondane peripezie, dan perfezione allo stile pulito nell’arte di ben scriver, ed il Giovane saggio ed accorto, che non dovrà fare Professione d’Anacoreta, e non ha vocazione di ritirarsi in un Chiostro, si renderà usuali quegli accidenti, che farebbero più impressione, quando a un novizio del Mondo giungessero affatto nuovi.²¹

Among the works quoted by Santacolomba, there is also Chiari’s *La filosofessa italiana*, highlighting the diffusion of this (and other) novels in all parts of Italy even after Venetian publishers and authors stopped publishing them. More importantly, they suggest the adaptability of these texts to different contexts, and different readers. Interestingly, the function here attributed to novels is similar to that suggested by Pasinelli in the *dedica* of the *Lettere critiche* in 1743, when the bookseller had proposed the book to his young dedicatee as a way of getting initial knowledge of the world for someone who was still too young to experience it by himself: ‘non conosce per anco il Mondo per pratica, potrà anticipatamente in Teorica considerarlo; perchè poscia unita l’esperienza alla cognizione possa fare la meritata giustizia’.²² The educative purposes of the novel therefore survive, even though at this point addressed to a different audience. Interestingly, Santacolomba does not see any conflict between the education provided by his school, and that of the novel.

21 Santacolomba, *L’Educazione della gioventù*, p. 296.

22 See Costantini, *Lettere critiche*. See also Chapter 1 of the present volume.

And this is perhaps a sign that the conflict between traditional education and the alternative form of it promoted by novels had now partially disappeared. The ‘traditional’ schoolmaster recognises that it is impossible for his system to give a proper knowledge of the world to his students; and sees novels as an alternative way of learning about it. Far away from Venice, the disobedient path of *La filosofessa* arrives at the doors of Santacolomba’s school, to teach pupils the ways of the world.

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Appendix A: A bibliography of eighteenth-century Venetian novels: first editions.

The present bibliography does not represent a complete survey of eighteenth-century novel, but a preliminary effort aimed at establishing Venetian first editions.

I have particularly focused on *princeps* editions for two reasons. The first one is of course the need to rely on first editions rather than uncontrolled and late reprints – a need which is not easily satisfied as novels were heavily reprinted in Venice and in other Italian States. This vast production however, probably because it belonged to a ‘marginal’ genre, has been subjected to continuous losses during centuries, so that bibliographical records – on which all bibliographies have been based until now – recorded as *princeps* editions which were in fact reprints, and quite often (especially in the case of Neapolitan reprints) such ‘false’ editions give also misleading information about authors.

The second reason is a practical one. Making a bibliography requires great efforts. The recollection of bibliographical records – making a list from existing lists – is a necessary procedure, but not the only one. The starting list has been based on three scholarly works by Giambattista Marchesi, Luca Clerici, and Tatiana Crivelli, following the corrections and amendments made by other scholars. All the records have been checked over the Italian and the British national OPACs, and whenever possible over printed or manuscript library catalogues.

Bibliographical records of the eighteenth-century novel are particularly difficult to decipher: first, because there exists no reference bibliography or short-title catalogue for eighteenth-century Italian editions. Consequently, in the past, librarians and bibliographers have mainly referred to Marchesi's bibliography, published in the first decade of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, Marchesi's work has several mistakes about attribution, dates, places or printers. The use of this bibliography as the main reference by librarians resulted in a large propagation of such mistakes. The establishing of the online Italian Opac made it possible to access and analyse a large quantity of records but, in the case of novels, they could also be more puzzling. For instance, bibliographical descriptions made by different librarians for the same edition present discrepancies among themselves (a typical example is that of different fingerprints); not to mention the risk of continuing the propagation of mistakes. In fact, online tools give an invaluable aid for research, but at the same time, the findings have to be checked against other sources.

The methodology used in the making of this first bibliography had precisely the goal to integrate and amend existing bibliographies through the analysis of historical and bibliographical information. Venetian archives and libraries have been particularly important for this purpose. One of the most valuable sources are the *Mandati per licenze di stampa* (1739-1791) [ASV, *Riformatori*, 340–343], large manuscript lists where the *revisori*, the State censors, recorded all the imprimaturs granted to Venetian printers and booksellers. The *mandati* give us much useful information: the date (year, month and day) of the authorisation; the title of the work to be printed; the name of the *revisore* who read the work and gave permission for printing, and the number of volumes. While these details are always present, in some cases it is also possible to find further ones. On several occasions the *revisori* indicate if the revised book was in manuscript or printed form, helping to distinguish among

first and later editions. In the last decades of the century, there also appears the name of the *correttore* who proofread the text. Finally, some books – usually those which could annoy other States or the Church – were printed with false date and places of publication. In this case, the *mandati* refer to the register of *false date*.¹

Unfortunately, though representing a good source, the *mandati* are not always reliable. For instance, printers could be granted the imprimatur for a book but then decide not to print the work immediately. In other cases, if they had to make a reprint of a book which sold quickly, they did not ask for further permission. Originally, the *mandati* were written in small pieces of paper, then strung together and kept by the guild of printers (*Arte dei stampadori, librerii e ligadori di libri*). Once or twice every year, one of the *revisori* kept all these pieces and copied them into the registers which are those we can consult. For instance, we cannot exclude that some of these small notes were lost when the *revisore* collected all of them to copy them into the book. And it is also possible that – especially for works frequently reprinted (i.e. psalteries or devotional and religious books) – authorisation was given by word of mouth, leaving no documents to trace it down.

The second source of information about these editions is represented by the analysis of physical copies of books. There is a great deal of information which the ‘object’ book may give. The type of paper, the use of certain fonts or others, as well as more common (but important) features, such as size, margins, fonts, number of pages, number of folios used to make the book, they are all elements to be considered. The main problem of this approach is that novels are not easily accessible: although Venetian libraries held a good number of them, their collections

1 The repertoire of eighteenth-century Venetian books published with a false date has been recently published in Italy, *False date: repertorio delle licenze di stampa veneziane*, ed. by Bravetti and Granzotto.

are not complete. However, the bibliography indicates all cases in which the check on the physical copy of books has been impossible.

Notes and Abbreviations

The books of *Mandati* follow (as any document by the Republic of Venice) the Venetian calendar, which started the 1st of March and ended in the last day of February. To make an example: the first volume of the *Filosofessa italiana* was recorded the 2nd of February 1752, while the second and the third volumes the 1st of March, 1753. This means that between the first and the second authorisation passed less than one month (and not an entire year). The date of the *mandato* is followed by the identification number in the book. Every six months (or one year) the *revisore* in charge of recording them started a new list, beginning a new numeration. All the *mandati* are held in the series 340-344 of Venice's Archivio di Stato (ASV). In ASV are also on hold the original *mandati* which were written on small slips of paper, and their consultation is therefore extremely difficult.

The following abbreviations have been used to indicate records in existing bibliographies: Mar. (followed by the number of page): Marchesi. Cri. (followed by the number of bibliographical record): Crivelli. Cle. (followed by the number of page): Clerici.

- 1746 Anon. *Vita di Giannetto caffettiere* (Venezia). [8°, LI pp.]

The indication of date and place (but not of the printer) is in the last page. A copy of this work is held in the Biblioteca Marciana, while another appears in the catalogue of an antiquarian bookseller. The book has 51 pages, numbered using Roman numerals. This title is not present in the *mandati*, probably because books of up to three folios (1 folio= 16 pages) were not subject to the *mandato*.

- 1749 Zaccaria Seriman, *Viaggi di Enrico Wanton alle terre incognite Australi, ed al paese delle Scim[m]ie, ne' quali si spiegano il carattere li costumi le scienze, e la polizia di quegli straordinari abitanti. Tradotti da un manoscritto inglese, con figure in rame* (Venezia: Presso Giovanni Tagier). [8°, 2 vols]

[Mar. 418; Cri. 123] The first part was registered in *Mand.* n. 256, 20 Agosto 1748, MS, Bartoli [ASV, *Riformatori*, 340] The second part in *Mand.* n. 76, 18 Luglio 1749, Bartoli [ASV, *Riformatori*, 340]. In 1763 is recorded a *mandato* under the name of Giovan Battista Remondini for *Viaggi di Enrico Wanton alle terre incognite*, *Mand.*, n. 1025, 22 ottobre 1763, De Bonis [ASV, *Riformatori*, 341], to be published with the false date of *Berna*. An annotation on the side of the record however indicates that the authorisation was later denied, and Remondini fined for it: 'Fu ritirato et multa con term.e 6 Febr:o insieme vedi la terminaz'.² Despite this indication, an edition of this book indicating *Berna* in the frontispiece, *Viaggi di Enrico Wanton alle terre incognite australi, ed ai regni delle scimie, e de' cinocefali. Nuovamente tradotti da un manoscritto inglese* (*Berna*, 1764, 12°, in four volumes) is present in libraries and online. This copy is introduced by a fictitious note, *Avvertimento del nuovo traduttore* [pp. III-XII], written by a 'new' translator, who describes how, having found a new manuscript of the original English text, he decided to present a new translation of it, adding to the original one two more parts (the travel in the country of the *cinocefali*). Emanuele Antonio Cicogna in his *Saggio di bibliografia veneziana* indicates that 'l'edizione fu eseguita nella Villa di Melma vicina a Treviso'.³

2 See also *False date*, p. 189.

3 Emmanuele Antonio Cicogna, *Saggio di bibliografia veneziana* (Venice: Merlo, 1847). See also *False date*, p. 189.

- [1752] [Carlo Domenico Barbieri], *Avventure di un giovane cavaliere fino a stabilirsi in vero ma raro modo felicemente nel secolo, date altra volta alla luce col titolo di Verità mascherata ora ricorrette e dall'Editore dedicate alla nobile Gioventù* (Verona: Andreoni).

[Mar. 378; Cri. 9] In fact Barbieri re-edited a seventeenth-century devotional book, *La verità mascherata; ove si descrive il modo con cui un Giovane nobile si convertì a Dio* (in Venetia: Combi, 1680) [4°].⁴ See the review published in *Memorie per servire all'istoria letteraria*, I, p. 2 (February 1753), pp.15-16.

- 1753 Pietro Chiari, *La Filosofessa Italiana, o sia Le avventure della Marchesa N.N., Scritte da lei medesima* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 3 vols]

[Mar. 389; Cle. 86; Cri. 32]. The first volume is registered in *Mand.* n. 423, 2 February 1752, MS, Pivati; volumes 2 and 3 in *Mand.* n. 6, 1 March 1753, MS, Pivati. Marchesi, Clerici and Crivelli all indicated this work as originally composed by 2 volumes, and with an incorrect title (*La Filosofessa italiana, o sia Le avventure della Marchesa N.N., scritte da lei medesima e pubblicate dall'Abate Pietro Chiari*), lately corrected by Madrignani and Rambelli.⁵

- 1754 Pietro Chiari, *La ballerina onorata, o sia memorie d'una figlia naturale del Duca N.V., scritte da lei medesima.* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 2 vols]

[Mar. 379-380; Cle. 86; Cri. 22]. *Mand.* n. 67, 15 May 1753, MS, Pivati. In the 'Avviso dello stampatore' Pasinelli wrote: 'Alla Filosofessa Italiana vien dietro con una seconda edizione La Ballerina Onorata, altro Romanzo Moderno, compreso in due soli tomi, e nato dentro la nostra Italia dalla penna medesima. Benché egli sia d'un carattere asai diverso dal primo, non lascia d'essere egualmente dilettevole, ed istruttivo, e però si lusinga di ottenere dal Pubblico compatimento maggiore, giacchè fu dall'Autor suo maggiormente accresciuto. Accogliendosi dal Pubblico simili Libri con dell'Aggradimento, e con della impacenza, non credo con si poca spesa possa egli passare le ore oziose con più giovamento'.

- 1755 Pietro Chiari, *La cantatrice per disgrazia, o sia le avventure della Marchesa N.N., scritte da lei medesima e pubblicate dall'Abate Chiari* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 2 vols]

[Mar. 382; Cle. 86-87; Cri. 25] *Primo tomo* recorded in *Mand.* n. 151, 21 August 1753, MS, Pivati; *Tomo secondo* recorded in *Mand.* n. 328, 2 April 1754, MS, Pivati. Although Marchesi, Clerici and Crivelli indicate an edition dated 1754, I could not find it in libraries (neither could I find a bibliographical record in national and international OPACs). The two volumes were probably issued separately, as Pasinelli suggests in the *Avviso dello stampatore*. He wrote: 'esce finalmente alla luce il terzo Romanzo Italiano da me promesso fino dall'estate passata, col titolo della *Cantatrice per disgrazia*, di cui questo è il primo tomo; e sarà presto seguitato ancor dal secondo [...]. Ho io tardato più del dovere nel darlo fuori, perocchè l'Autore, imbarazzato da altre occupazioni, ha diferito piucchè non credevamo tutti due di dargli l'ultima mano'. The authorization of the *Riformatori* is printed in the first octavo, just before the frontispiece: 'Noi riformatori dello studio di Padova. [...] | Mandato il 21 Agosto 1753 | Registrato in Libro a carte 22. al num 151 addi 23 agosto 1753 | Registrato nel Magistrato eccell. Degli Esecutori contro al

4 See the record n. 6176 in *Catalogue des livres imprimez de la Bibliothèque du Roy* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1742). On Carlo Domenico Barbieri see Carlo Antonio de Rosa, *Memorie degli scrittori filippini, o siano della congregazione dell'Oratorio di S. Filippo Neri* (Naples: Porcelli, 1837), pp. 27-29.

5 Madrignani, pp. 14; Paolo Rambelli, 'Sulla princeps de *La filosofessa italiana* di Chiari', *The Italianist*, 24 (2004), 20-30.

Bestemmia. Alvise Legrenzi Segretario'. The two-year gap between authorisation and publication, as well as the fact that Pasinelli in the previous book had made the promise for a new novel very soon, can probably explain why he had been compelled to justify himself in the *Avviso*.

- 1755 Pietro Chiari, *La commediante in fortuna, o sia memorie di Madama N.N., scritte da lei medesima e pubblicate dall'Ab. Chiari* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 2 vols]

[Mar. 384; Cle. 87; Cri. 27] The two volumes are registered in *Mand.* n. 13, 29 March 1755, MS, Calogerà. The record is confirmed by the authorization printed in the first pages of the first volume: 'NOI RIFORMATORI | dello Studio di Padova. | Avendo veduto per la Fede di Revisione ed Approbazione del P. F. Gio: Paolo Zapparella Commissario del Santo Offizio di Venezia nel Libro intitolato *La commediante in fortuna, o sieno le Memorie di Madama N. N. Tomi due MS.*, non v'esser cosa alcuna contro la Santa Fede Cattolica; e parimente per attestato del Segretario Nostro, niente contro Principi, e buoni costumi, concedemo Licenza ad *Angelo Pasinello* Stampator di *Venezia*, che posi esser stampato, osservando gl'ordini in materia di Stampe, e presentando le solite Copie alle Pubbliche Librerie di Venezia, e di Padova. | Dat. li 29. Marzo 1755. | Registrato in Libro a Carte 2. al Num. 13. | Giacomo Zuccato Segret. | Addì 8 Aprile 1755. | Registrato nel Magistr. Eccell. degli Esecutori contro la Bestemmia. | Francesco Bianchi Segr.'. In a dedicatory letter 'to his friends', Pietro Chiari declares that the novel was written in a very short time: 'Non ci volea meno, Signori miei, de' vincoli più sacrosanti d'una vera amicizia per indurmi ad iscrivere, e pubblicare l'Operetta presente in una stagione, che per le passate mie applicazioni lunghissime mi rendeva bisognevole di qualche riposo. Intrapresa, e condotta dentro pochi giorni al suo fine, per dare piacere a voi soli', p. [v].

- 1756 Pietro Chiari, *La filosofessa italiana: o sia, Le avventure della Marchesa N.N. Accresciuta d'un quarto tomo in questa 2a ed. / con le aggiunte fatte dall'autore a ciascuno de' tomi precedenti* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 4 vols]

Recorded the fourth volume (Tomo IV) in *Mand.* n. 304, 12 May 1756, Calogerà. See Rambelli⁶ for a comparison between the structures of the novel between the first and the second edition.

- 1757 Pietro Chiari, *Il Poeta, o sia le avventure di D. Oliviero de Vega, Poeta spagnuolo, scritte da lui medesimo e tradotte in italiano dall'Abate Pietro Chiari, bresciano, Poeta di S.A.R. il Sig. Duca di Modena* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 3 vols]

[Mar. 405; Cle. 90; Cri. 40] The three volumes of the novel were recorded in *Mand.* n. 349, 22 July 1756, Calogerà. The date corresponds to the licence ('Noi Riformatori...') printed in the first volume. Marchesi, Clerici and Crivelli indicate the 1756 for the first edition, but all copies held in libraries and indicated in catalogues has the following year in the frontispiece. As Cristina Cappelletti clearly convincingly suggests⁷, bibliographers were probably misled by Melzi's wrong indication in the *Dizionario di opere anonime e pseudonime*⁸. There is some disagreement among critics (i.e. Clerici) about the novel as an original work, and some of them tend to see it as a translation. In fact, as Cappelletti observed, in the *Gazzetta Veneta*, n. 78, 7 November 1761, making a list of his works up to that moment, Chiari enlists *Il Poeta* among the original ones. He also distinguishes these works from 'alcuni Romanzi, ed altri libricciuoli da me in parte tradotti con delli

6 Rambelli, 'Sulla princeps', 20–30.

7 Cristina Cappelletti, "'Un diluvio di romanzi perniciosi'", p. 49.

8 Melzi, *Dizionario di opere anonime e pseudonime*.

accrescimenti notabili, ma che propriamente non sono unici, ne voglio usurparmeli come sono'. Furthermore, at pages xi-xii of *La commediante* published by Pasinelli there is a list of Chiari's works as 'Opere composte dall'Abate Pietro Chiari e da me stampate' with *il Poeta* accompanied by the annotation 'Si stamperà'.

- 1757 Pietro Chiari, *La giuocatrice di Lotto, o sia memoria di Madama Tolot, scritte da lei medesima, colle regole con cui fece al lotto una fortuna considerevole, pubblicate dall'Abate Pietro Chiari* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°]
[Mar. 392; Cle. 87; Cri. 34] Recorded in *Mand.* n. 29, 15 April 1757, MS, Calogerà. It is interesting to report the title with which the book was registered: 'La Giuocatrice del Lotto, ò sia Metodo di Madama Tolot Scritto da Lei Mesesima colle regole aritmetiche, ed Astronomiche di cui s'è ella servita per fare col giuoco del lotto una fortuna considerabile pubblicato dall'Abb. Chiari'. The title is a good example of the marketing strategies used in that period: the *lotto* was increasingly popular in Venice, and it is possible that Pasinelli thought to arouse the interest of new readers by stressing the 'secrets' and 'rules' for choosing the winning numbers.
- 1758 Pietro Chiari, *La Zingana, memorie egiziane di Madama N.N., scritte in francese da lei medesima e pubblicate dall'Abate Pietro Chiari* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 2 vols]
[Mar. 422; Cle. 87; Cri. 49] *Mand.* n. 107, 25 July 1757, Calogerà. The title recorded was: 'La Cingana Memorie Egiziane di Madama N.N. scritte in Inglese da lei Med:a, e pubblicate dall'Abate Pietro Chiari'.
- 1760 Pietro Chiari, *La francese in Italia, o sia memorie critiche di Madama N.N., scritte da lei medesima, e pubblicate dall'Abate Pietro Chiari* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 2 vols]
[Mar. 390; Cle. 87; Cri. 33] Recorded in *Mand.* n. 44, 22 May 1759, MS, Calogerà [First volume] and n. 56, 3 June 1759, MS, Calogerà [Second volume]. Marchesi, Clerici and Crivelli indicate the *princeps* as: Pietro Chiari, *La francese in Italia, o sia memorie critiche di Madama N.N., scritte da lei medesima, e pubblicate dall'Abate Pietro Chiari*. (Venice [but Naples]: Presso eredi Pellecchia, a spese di Venaccia). What is misleading in this case is that the Neapolitan entrepreneur responsible for this edition, the bookseller Venaccia, indicated the false place of Venice in their frontispiece, and the date should be possibly considered as false. Mario Infelise reports an official complaint presented to the *Riformatori* by several Venetian printers (including Pasinelli) in this same year against the 'invasion' of pirated editions coming from Naples.⁹ The only scholar who indicates Pasinelli's 1760 edition as the *princeps* is Anna Scannapieco in her extremely documented catalogue of Venaccia's editions.¹⁰
- 1761 Antonio Benedetto Basso, *L'Avventuriere, o sia memorie di Rinaldo Dalisso, scritte da lui medesimo*. (Venezia: [Colombani]). [8°]
[Mar. 379; Cri. 10] The novel was recorded in *Mand.* n. 326, 9 August 1761, MS, Bartoli, by the bookseller Paolo Colombani. Bartolomeo Gamba in *De' Bassanesi illustri*,¹¹ signalling the novel, writes: 'in fronte a questo romanzo trovo scritto di pugno di Valentino Novelletto: che l'autore era bassanese, e figlio di un nostro maestro di scuola detto il *Perrucchetta*; inoltre, che da giovane passò in Francia e in Inghilterra, e che pubblicò a Parigi una sua Confutazione alla celebre opera di

9 Infelise, 'Gli scambi librari veneto-napoletani'.

10 Scannapieco, 'Un editore goldoniano'. For a general overview of Neapolitan editions of Italian novels, see also Bertoni, 'Editoria e romanzo fra Venezia e Napoli'.

11 Gamba, *De' Bassanesi illustri*, pp. 71–72.

Sherlock intorno ai poeti italiani, col titolo seguente: *Observations sur les Poètes italiens, par Mons. Bassi, ou Réponse aux remarques sur les mêmes Poètes du Voyageur Anglais Mons. Sherlock. A Londres, et se trouve à Paris, 1780, in 8°*.

- 1761 Pietro Chiari, *La viaggiatrice, o sia le avventure di Madamigella E.B., scritte da lei medesima in altrettante lettere all'Abate Pietro Chiari, e da lui pubblicate* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 2 vols]

[Mar. 417; Cle. 88; Cri. 47] Recorded in *Mand.* n. 312, 24 May 1760, MS, Pivati [First volume]; 27 August 1760, Pivati. [Second volume]. The *licenza* is also reprinted at the beginning of the two volumes: the first one is dated 24 May 1760, while the second one has the date 1st September 1760. Both Clerici and Crivelli indicate a first Pasinelli edition in 1760, but I was unable to find it in libraries. The 10th of June, 1761, in the *Gazzetta Veneta* n. 35, Chiari began to publish other letters by the *Viaggiatrice*. He presented these letters to the reader as a sequel of the first two volumes already published: 'A chi non è nota la mia *Viaggiatrice*, dopo che io ho pubblicate l'anno scorso in due Tomi le sue curiose avventure, e sono state onorate dal compatimento del Mondo. Da quel tempo in quà io non seppi di lei novella, che due sole volte con due sue brevissime lettere. Una terza me n'è arrivata Sabato passato, che giudico pmeritevole di passare sotto gli occhi del Pubblico; perocchè contiene ella un progetto, che interessar può la coriosità di chiunque almeno abbia letti gli altri due Tomi delle Lettere sue'. In her letter, the fictitious *Viaggiatrice* mentions the two volumes already published '*Se le Lettere mie avranno presso di voi la fortuna dell'altre, e vi piacerà di pubblicarle: pubblicatele pure, o di mano in mano quando vi arrivano, o tutte in una volta quanod possano esse formare un terzo Volume, siccome degli altri due faceste, che in ciò mi rimetto al giudizio vostro, e al vostro piacere. Dal canto mio, io mi sforzerò, che vi rechino sempre nuova materia da divertire il pubblico, da far onore a voi stesso, e da meritare a me pure il compatimento del Mondo. [...]*'. Chiari published other letters by the *Viaggiatrice* in other August issues of the *Gazzetta*.

- 1761 Pietro Chiari, *La bella pellegrina, o sia memorie di una dama Moscovita, scritte da lei medesima e pubblicate dall'Abate Pietro Chiari*. (Venezia: [Marcuzzi]). [8°, 2 vols]

[Mar. 380; Cle. 88; Cri. 23] Recorded by Pietro Marcuzzi in *Mand.* N. 292, 21 July 1761, MS, Baroni [First volume] and n. 324, 4 August 1761, MS, Baroni [Second volume]. Marchesi wrongly dated the first edition in 1759. Both Clerici and Crivelli on the other hand indicate the 1761 edition as published by Deregni. The high publicity made by Chiari for this novel in the *Gazzetta Veneta*, however, helps to understand this confusion. The ballyhoo inaugurated in the *Gazzetta veneta* n. 41, 1 Lug 1761: 'Presso il consueto Librajo di Madama la Gazzetta [vedesi esposto il breve Manifesto seguente, che fu pubblicato in questo giorno medesimo. A' leggitori benevoli delle Opere sue l'Abate Pietro Chiari. Il primo tomo del mio Romanzo intitolato la *Bella Pellegrina* uscirà senza dubbio alla luce sulla fine del Mese corrente, e verso la metà del venturo sarà egli assolutamente seguitato dal Tomo secondo. Per risarcire in qualche maniera il Pubblico della sua aspettazione lunghissima, ho fatto il possibile perchè questo Romanzo mio sia degli altri tutti migliore.[...]' In the following sentences, Chiari invites readers to buy the novel by subscription, which would allow them to get it for a lower price: 'Il prezzo di questo Romanzo in due Volumi compreso, e dicevolmente stampato sarà di lire sei della nostra moneta; ma chi volesse anticipatamente associarsi a questa Edizione goderà l'avvantaggio di lire due, contandone sole quattro al consueto Librajo della Gazzetta, che terrà aperta l'associazione fino al giorno che n'esca alla luce il Tomo secondo, e vale a dire, circa la metà dell'Agosto venturo'. The *libraio della Gazzetta* was Domenico Deregni, and it is likely that the 1761 'Deregni' edition registered in bibliographies has some element – maybe a catalogue in the last pages, or his name on the frontispiece – which points to this bookseller. Immediately after,

Chiari explicitly says that readers' subscriptions will help him, showing 'una testimonianza della loro benevolenza nell'Edizione d'un Opera, in cui per la metà del profitto sono interessato io medesimo; essendo tempo ommai, che dopo aver beneficiati per più anni i Libraj colle Opere mie, pensi una volta a beneficiare ancora me stesso'. Chiari kept informed his readers in the following issues of the *Gazzetta* stubbornly inviting them to subscribe, while at the same time he aroused their curiosity about the novel. For instance, in the *Gazzetta* n. 49 (29 July 1761) he writes: 'L'approvazione del mondo mi preme; ma mi preme assai più, come all'Oratore suddetto, la Casa mia: e vale a dire, l'Associazione ad un Libro raccomandato alla pubblica benignità, che fruttandomi per la prima volta qualche cosa di meglio degli altri, mi servirà di stimolo a terminarne un altro al più presto [the new novel is the *Veneziana di spirito*]'. In the *Gazzetta* n. 52 (8 August 1761) Chiari can finally advertise the first volume, available in Domenico Deregni's shop: 'A tenore delle mie pomesse [sic] stà questa mattina esposto in vendita presso al Deregni il primo Tomo della *Bella Pellegrina*. Chi lo volesse solo avrà la bontà di pagarlo *tre lire*; e chi goder volesse del privileggio degli Associati, sborsandone *lire quattro* s'intenderà che abbia pagato anche il tomo secondo, il quale non tarderà ad uscire, che quindici giorni'. While the second volume is advertised in the *Gazzetta* n. 59 (2 September 1761): 'Oggi s'è dato al pubblico il Tomo Secondo della *Bella Pellegrina*, da' Signori Associati per loro benignità aspettato con tanta impazienza: ed ecco però esattamente compiute le mie promesse, alle quali non mancherò mai nemmeno per l'avvenire, trattandosi di persone umanissime, e delle povere fatiche mie da tanti anni addietro così benemerite'.

- 1762 *L'Ussaro italiano, cioè, Le avventure amorose e militari del conte V... di K...: accadute nel presente secolo e scritte da lui medesimo in lingua italiana* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 2 vols]

[Mar. 416; Cle. 90; Cri. 45] The novel was recorded by Angelo Pasinelli in *Mand.* N.536, 8 February 1761, De Bonis. Although Melzi attributed this novel to Chiari, Marchesi and then Crivelli and Clerici tend all to doubt this attribution.¹² Chiari does not mention this novel among the list of his works presented in *Gazzetta Veneta* n. 78, 7 November 1761.

- 1762 Pietro Chiari, *La Viniziana di spirito, o sia le avventure di una viniziana ben nata, scritte da lei medesima, e ridotte in altrettante massime, le più giovevoli a formare una dama di spirito, pubblicate dall'abate Pietro Chiari bresciano, Poeta di S.A.R. il Sig. Duca di Modena*, (Venezia: [Marcuzzi]). [8°, 2 vols]

[Mar. 419; Cle. 88; Cri. 48] Recorded in *Mand.* n. 728, 21 August 1762, MS, Rebellini [first volume] and *Mand.* n. 738, 15 September 1762, MS, Rebellini [second volume] by the printer Pietro Marcuzzi. Marchesi gave the wrong date of 1749, corrected by Clerici and Crivelli. Crivelli rightly indicates the two editions issued that same year, one in Venice, and another in Parma [Carmignani]. At the beginning of the 1760s, Carmignani begun to reprint novels by Chiari as well as by other authors. The imminent publishing of the *Viniziana* was advertised in the *Gazzetta di Parma* [which was printed by Carmignani]¹³ the 27 August 1762, only six days after the official authorization recorded in the *Mandati*. It is therefore possible to hypothesize a direct relationship between Carmignani and either the author himself, or someone involved in the production of the book (Deregni, or Marcuzzi).¹⁴ The mostly contemporary reprint is also signalled in the *Nuova Veneta*

12 See in particular the debate reported by Clerici, 'Best-seller del Settecento', 73–101 (p. 73).

13 Pettoello, 'La circolazione del libro'.

14 Cristina Cappelletti hypothesizes a relationship between Carmignani and Pasinelli, referring in particular to the frontispiece of *La donna che non si trova* (1768), which states 'In Venezia:

Gazzetta n. 42 (4 August 1762), then edited by Domenico Caminer: ‘*La Bella Pellegrina* Romanzo del Signor Abate Chiari, quale ebbe non minore applauso, & esito di quello che abbiano avuti li altri usciti dalla stessa penna, cosichè fu già in alcune Città di Italia subito ristampato, e si ristampa ora a Parma’.

- 1762 *L’Americana ramminga* cioè *Memorie di Donna Innez de Quebrada scritte da lei stessa , ed ora pubblicate da M. G. Di S. sua confidente amica* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 2 vols]

[Mar. 373, Cle. 90 ; Cri. 20] Recorded [only the first volume] in *Mand.* n. 763, 13 dicembre 1762, Macarinelli. Melzi wrongly indicated Chiari as the author.¹⁵ The false attribution is therefore confirmed by the catalogues of novels which Pasinelli used to add at the end of its publication, where *L’Americana ramminga* is always enlisted among the novels ‘written by other authors’.

- 1762-63 Antonio Piazza, *L’omicida irreprensibile, ovvero le funeste avventure del sig. di T. scritte da lui medesimo. Dedicate a sua eccellenza il signor Gio. Battista Semenzi* (Venezia: de Castro). [8°, 2 vols]

[Mar. 403-404; Cri. 106] Recorded in *Mand.* n. 749, 9 December 1762 [first volume] and n. 869, 11 April 1763 [second volume], Baroni. In the Manifesto published in one of the last issues of GV in Sept. 1762, Piazza indicates the one responsible for the printing Modesto Fenzo.

- 1764 Antonio Piazza, *L’italiano fortunato o sia Memorie del sig. R.Z. scritte da lui medesimo e dedicate a s.e. milord Guglielmo Blanstir*¹⁶ (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 1 vol]

[Mar. 394, Cri. 99] The novel was firstly recorded by Antonio Passanese in *Mand.* n. 1157, 9 May 1764, but the record is deleted and accompanied by the annotation: ‘Ritirato [...] e assegnato al Pasinello’. The record on Pasinelli’s behalf is reported the 8 June 1764 in *Mand.* n. 1202.

- 1764/65 Pietro Chiari, *L’amante incognita, o sia le avventure d’una principessa svedese, scritte da lei medesima, e pubblicate dall’Abate P. Chiari* (Venezia: Pasinelli). [8°, 2 vols]

[Mar. 372; Cri. 19] Usually bibliographers indicate the first edition as published by Carmignani in 1765, and Carmignani himself advertises the publication of this novel in the *Gazzetta di Parma* on 22 July 1765.¹⁷ As a matter of fact, the two volumes were recorded by Pasinelli in *Mand.* n. 1255, 7 September 1764, Calogerà, about one year before Carmignani’s edition. It is very difficult therefore to ascertain which was the first edition, but some bibliographical elements may suggest that in this case Carmignani used Pasinelli’s edition, simply changing the frontispiece. To this direction points for instance the similarity between the recorded fingerprints of the two editions, which have several elements in common.¹⁸

presso Angiolo Pasinelli... si vende in Parma da Filippo Carmignani’, but Pasinelli apparently had nothing to do with the publication of *L’amore senza fortuna*.

15 See Clerici, p. 76; Marco Catucci, ‘L’Americana Raminga’, *Sincronie*, VIII (2004), 171–77.

16 The dedicatee is possibly a William Stuart [duke?] of Blantyre. A Blandir can be found also in the criminal cause against the freemasons’ lodge ‘Unity’, discovered in 1775 in Venice.

17 Pettoello, ‘La circolazione del libro’.

18 Fingerprints. Tome 1, Carmignani 1765: oae- **m-X. ueea zisu** (3) 1765 (R) - [var. a-m’ **m-X. r-a-zisu** (3) 1765 (R)]. Pasinelli 1766: e-no l-n- **ueea zisu** (3) 1766 (R). Tome 2, Carmignani 1765: **15ne i:a- e,ri avsp** (3) 1765 (R) [var. C **15he i,a- e,ri elno** (3) 1765 (R)]. Pasinelli 1766: e.t- e.u- **e,ri avsp** (3) 1766 (R) [var. B **15t- i:a- e,ri avsp** (3) 1766 (R)]. The reliability of fingerprints has to be taken with a grain of salt, especially if – as in this case – it was not possible to compare the two physical editions. For instance, the discrepancies between the two records could have been

- 1765 Pietro Chiari, *L'amore senza fortuna, o sia memorie d'una dama portoghese, scritte da lei medesima, pubblicate dall'Ab. Pietro Chiari* (Firenze [but Venice]: Colombani). [8°, 2 voll]
 [Mar. 373; Cle. 89; Cri. 21] Both Marchesi and Clerici indicate a Pasinelli edition of this novel published in 1763. Following R. Ricorda's and C. M. Madrignani's observations however, Crivelli postponed the date to 1765, publisher Paolo Colombani. As a matter of fact, the novel was recorded by Paolo Colombani in *Mand.* n. 1459, 29 May 1765, Scottoni. On the side, the annotation '*terminazione in data di Firenze*' [see also *False date*, n. 614, which indicates as *revisore* Giovanni Francesco instead of Scottoni]. There are two possible causes for publishing the novel with a *falsa data*. On the one hand, the Portuguese origins of the protagonist could be somehow related to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal. A large number of pamphlets and polemical books both against and in defence of the Order were published by Venetian printers following the suppression of the Jesuits ordered by Joseph I of Portugal in 1759. The Venetian Authorities in this case made a large use of the *false date* which allowed the publishing without exposing the Republic to political embarrassment with other Countries or the Church. It is possible however that in this case the *revisore* acted from an excess of caution. However, the novel does not mention anything about Jesuits at all. On the other hand, there are many references to foreign countries, and their behaviour and exchanges in the colonies.
- 1765 Antonio Piazza, *La Turca in Cimento, osia l'avventure di Zelmira, scritte da lei medesima e dedicate a s.e.f. Daniel Barbaro* (Venezia: Antonio Decastro). [8°, 2 vols]
 [Mar. 415; Cri. 114] Recorded in *Mand.* n. 1525, 18 August 1765, Contin [first volume] and n. 1560, 24 September 1765, Calogera [second volume]. The dedicatee was possibly Daniel Barbaro who was Avogador di Comun in 1767 along with Giacomo Antonio Marcello and Ludovico Angaran.¹⁹

produced by a different methodology used by the librarians who made the record, and have nothing to do with the edition in itself.

19 See Enrico Basaglia, 'Il diritto penale', in *Storia della cultura veneta*, v/2: *Il Settecento*, 163-178 (169).